

A DELL COMIC
DELL
A DELL COMIC

ZANE GREY

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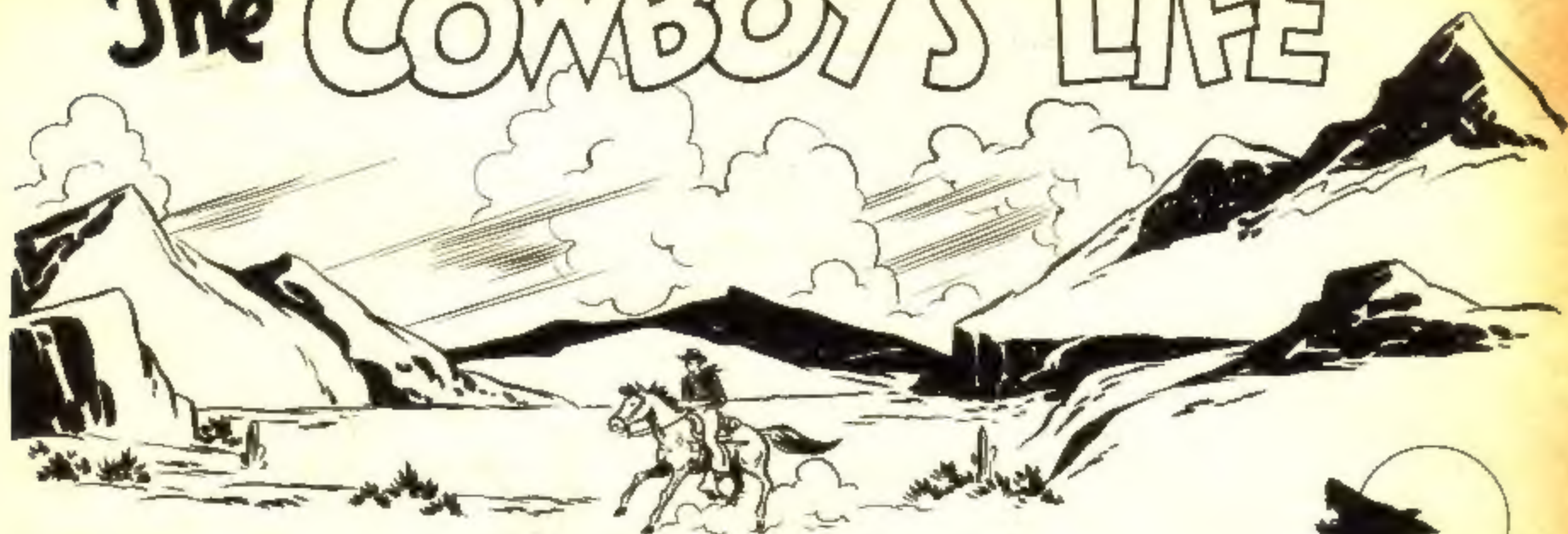
NO. 301

the mysterious rider

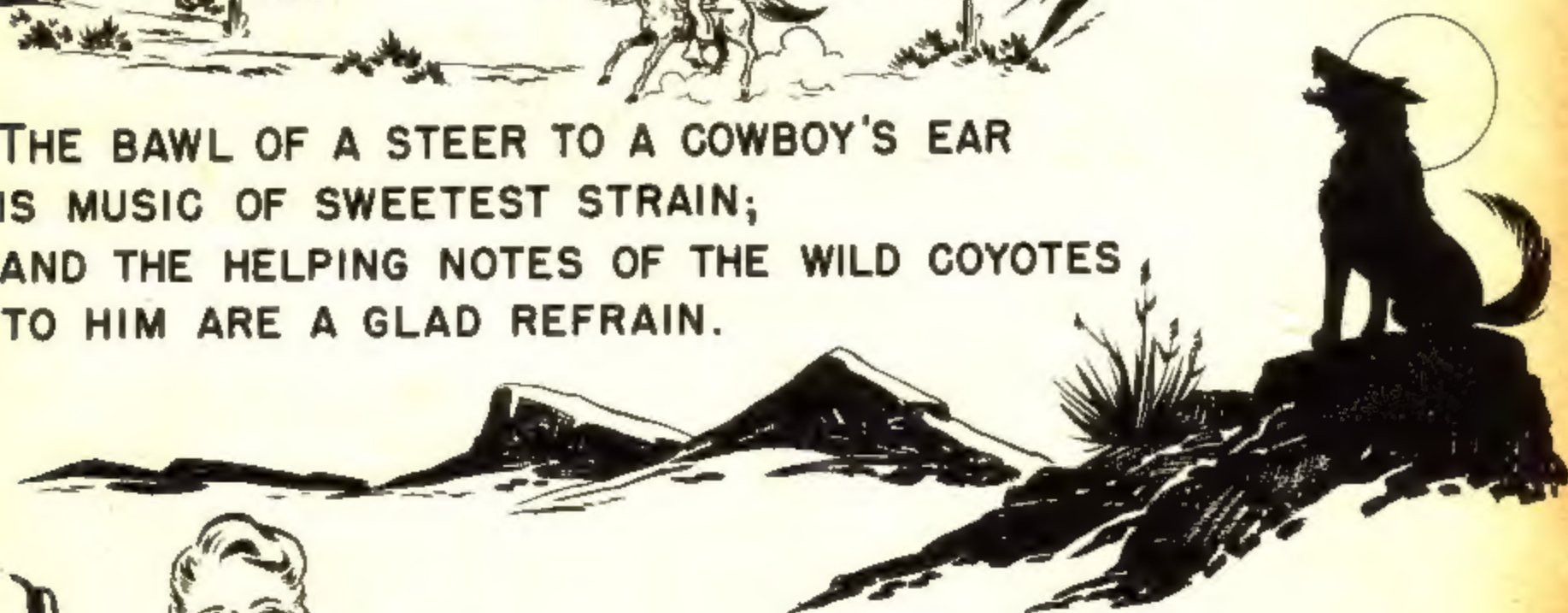
52 pages -
ALL COMICS!



The COWBOY'S LIFE

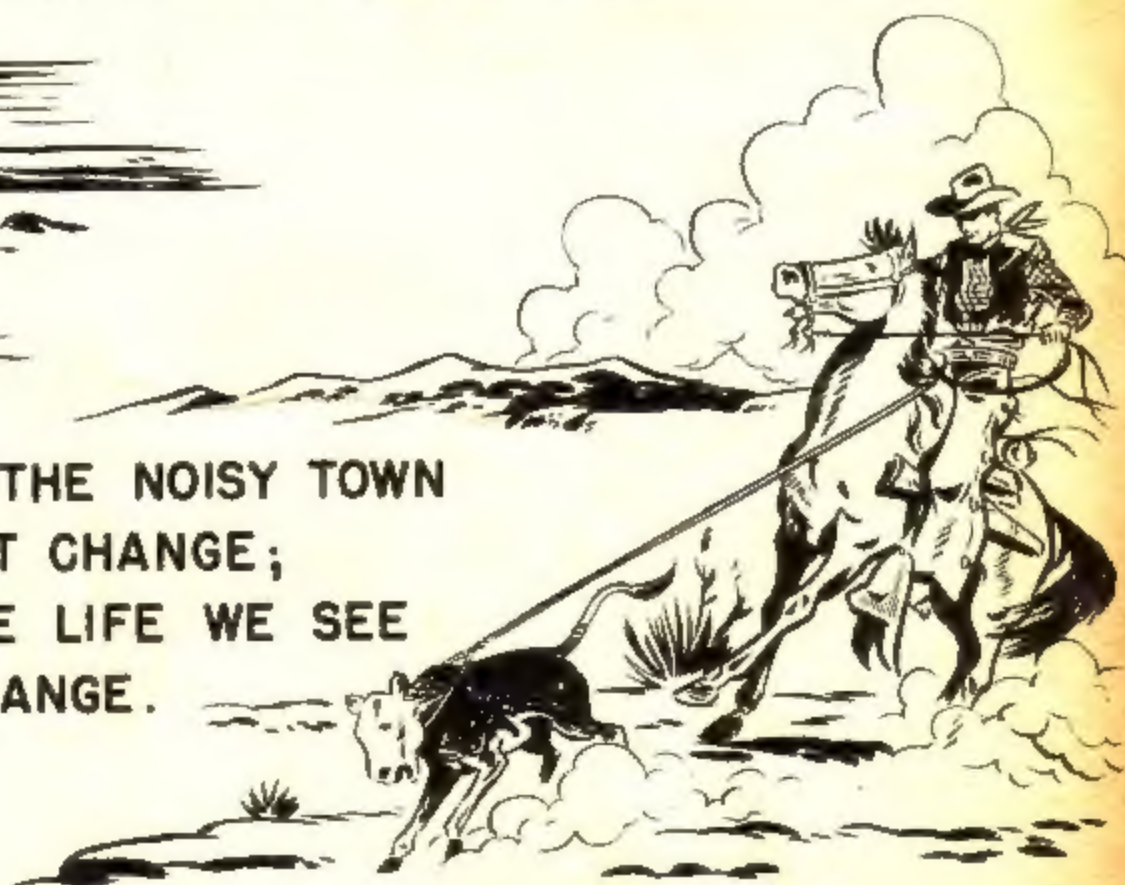


THE BAWL OF A STEER TO A COWBOY'S EAR
IS MUSIC OF SWEETEST STRAIN;
AND THE HELPING NOTES OF THE WILD COYOTES
TO HIM ARE A GLAD REFRAIN.



AND HIS JOLLY SONG SPEEDS HIM ALONG
AS HE THINKS OF HIS LITTLE GAL
WITH GOLDEN HAIR WHO IS WAITING THERE
AT THE BARS OF THE HOME CORRAL.

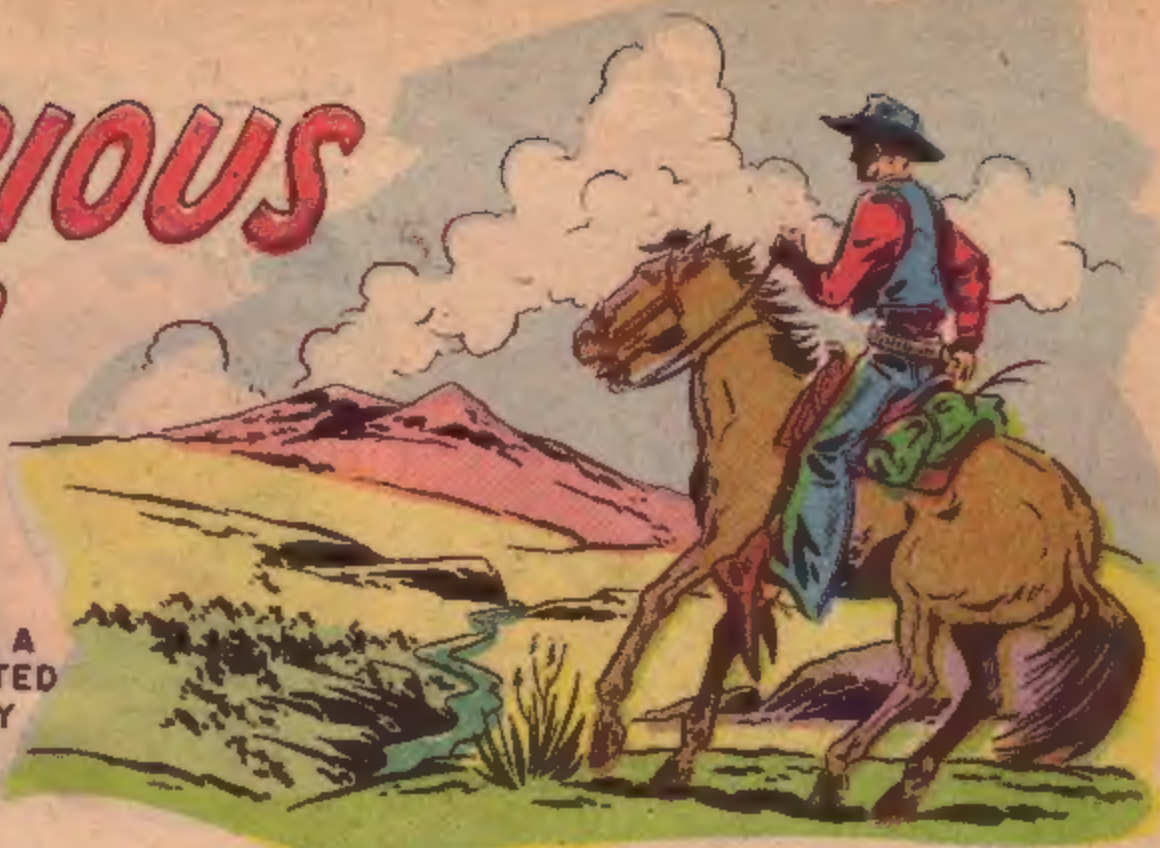
FOR A KINGLY CROWN IN THE NOISY TOWN
HIS SADDLE HE WOULDN'T CHANGE;
NO LIFE SO FREE AS THE LIFE WE SEE
'WAY OUT ON THE YASO RANGE.



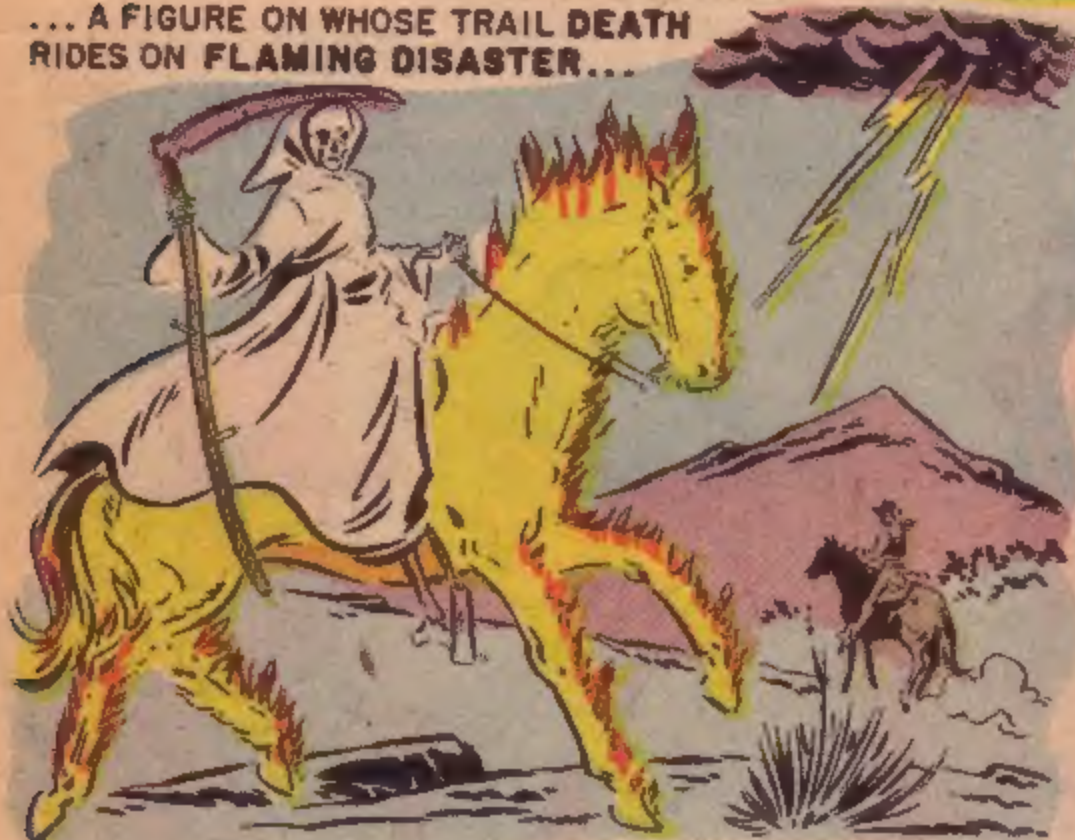
The **MYSTERIOUS RIDER**

By ZANE GREY

FOR NEARLY A SCORE OF YEARS, A MYSTERIOUS WANDERER HAS HAUNTED THE MOUNTAIN TRACKS AND LONELY SETTLEMENTS OF COLORADO...



... A FIGURE ON WHOSE TRAIL DEATH RIDES ON FLAMING DISASTER...



YET, UNHARMED, THE MAN WITH THE BURNING EYES, WHO CALLS HIMSELF BENT WADE, RIDES ON...

... ALWAYS ON, TO HIS NEXT RENDEZVOUS WITH MEN WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE...



... AND THROUGH THAT FAR-FLUNG WILDERNESS THE APPROACH OF AN UNKNOWN RIDER BRINGS ONE DREADED NAME TO MIND --- "WADE! WILL IT BE BENT WADE?"

ONE NIGHT, NEAR SUNDOWN, A LONE RIDER PICKS HIS WAY DOWN TO A MINING CAMP, DEEP IN A MOUNTAIN GULCH.



NOBODY IN THE CROWDED SALOON NOTICES THE ENTRANCE OF THE NEWCOMER...



BUT AS HE MOVES TO THE BAR, EVERY HEAD TURNS TOWARD THE STRANGER WITH THE BURNING EYES...



-- BUT I'M LOOKING FOR A CHILD WHOSE FOLKS WERE KILLED BY INJUNS, IN A RAID ON A WAGON TRAIN --- I'LL TELL YOU MY STORY, AND THEN ---



JUST A MINUTE! WHO ARE YOU, MISTER?

MY NAME IS WADE!

BENT WADE--- I KNEW IT! GENTLEMEN, WHEREVER THIS BENT WADE SHOWS UP AND TELLS HIS STORY, BAD LUCK STRIKES! MEN DIE SUDDENLY!

I VOTE THAT WE WIPE OUT HIS JINX!

YEAH! RIGHT NOW!



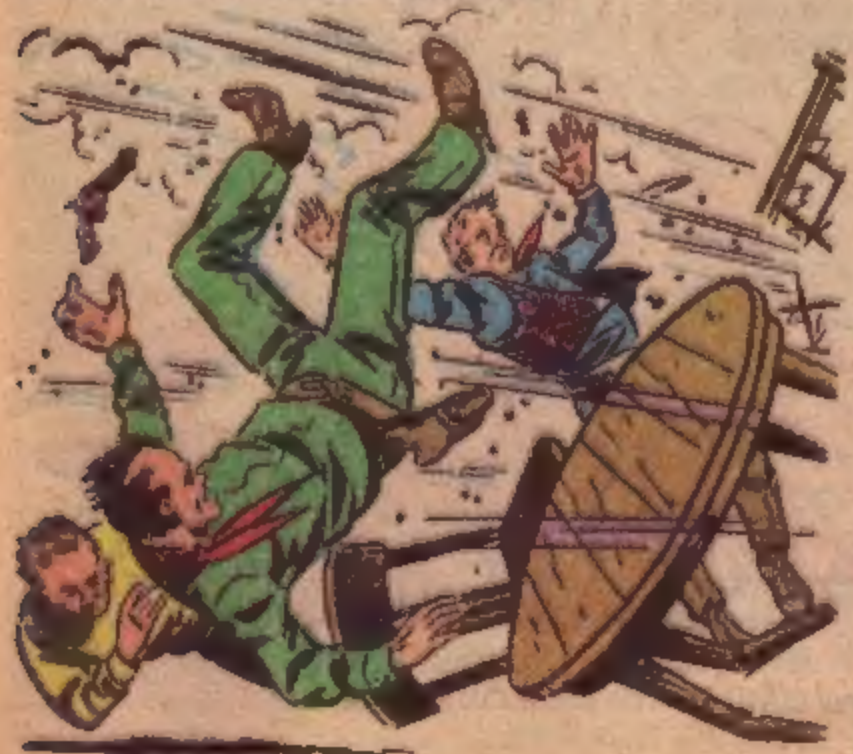


THE ROOM ROCKS TO GUNFIRE... BULLETS CUT WADE'S CLOTHING, BUT FAIL TO STOP HIS COOL RETREAT...



ONE WILD SHOT DETONATES A STOCK OF CAPS AND BLASTING POWDER ACROSS THE STREET...

LIKE THE CRASH OF DOOM THE BLAST HURLS EVERY MAN TO THE FLOOR...



HEY! WHAT'S
HAPPENING
NOW?

THE GROUND'S MOVING
UNDER US!

R-R-RUMBLE

BENT WADE HAS GONE... BUT THE CHAIN OF
CALAMITY THAT HE BROUGHT CONTINUES...

LOOSEMED BY THE JAR OF THE DYNAMITE
BLAST, THE WHOLE FLANK OF THE MOUNTAIN
BREAKS AWAY...

... AND SLIDES INTO
THE GULCH...



A FEW NIGHTS LATER, DISTANT LIGHTNING GLOWS
ABOVE WADE'S LONELY TRAIL...



THE MUTTERING THUNDER FINDS
AN ECHO IN THE MOANING OF A
RESTLESS TRAIL HERD...

...AND THE SHORT TEMPER OF SLEEPLESS COW
HANDS.



SORRY I STARTLED YOU!
I WAS HOPING YOUR COOK
COULD SPARE ME A LITTLE
FLOUR AND BACON FAT!

YOU CAN
REACH IT THERE
IN THE CHUCK
WAGON-- HELP
YOURSELF,
STRANGER!



THANKS, BOYS! I SURE HOPE
THAT STORM BLOWS OVER--
IT'S HARD ON THE NERVES OF
MAN AND BEAST!

RUMBLE--UMBLE-UMBLE--UMBLE--

FROM NOW ON, TWO-
SPOT, JUST KEEP YOUR HANDS--
AND YOUR CARDS--IN SIGHT!

JIM, YOU'D
BETTER SAY THAT
WITH A SMILE, OR--



THE GROWL OF THUNDER GROWS... AND AMONG THE
PLAYERS TENSION MOUNTS...

OR--WHAT, TWO-SPOT?
MAKE YOUR PLAY!

I WILL--
IF YOUR FINGERS
TOUCH THAT
GUN!



GENTLEMEN, QUIET! I'LL SHOOT
THE GUN OUT OF THE FIRST HAND THAT
DRAWS ONE... NOW, SHUCK YOUR
BELTS, AND TOSS 'EM
OVER HERE!

HUH?

HE
MEANS IT,
BOYS!



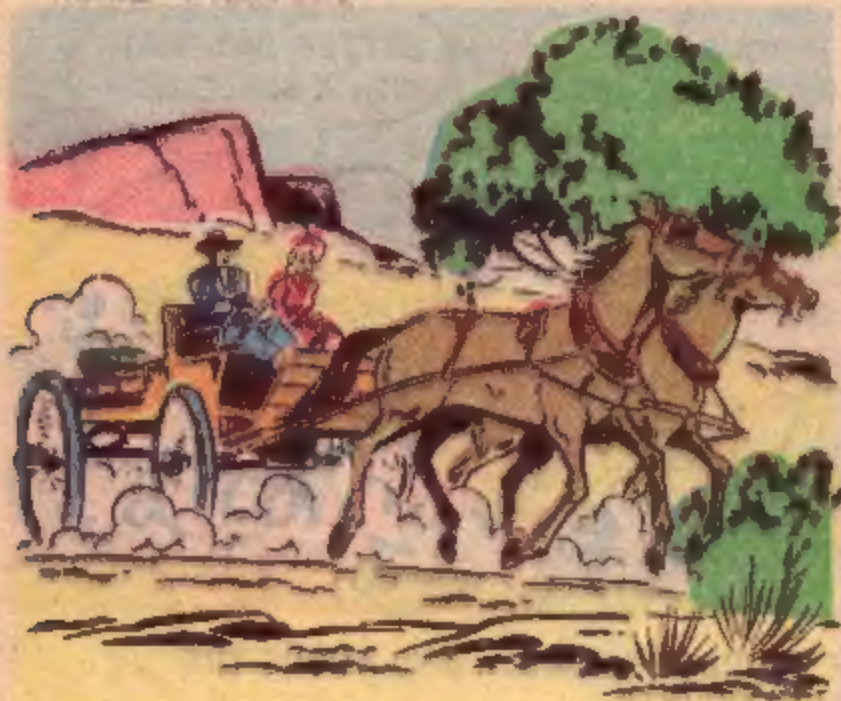
THANK YOU, GENTS! MAYBE YOU DON'T YET KNOW THE AWFUL THING IT CAN BE TO TAKE A HUMAN LIFE-- DELIBERATELY-- BUT I KNOW IT!



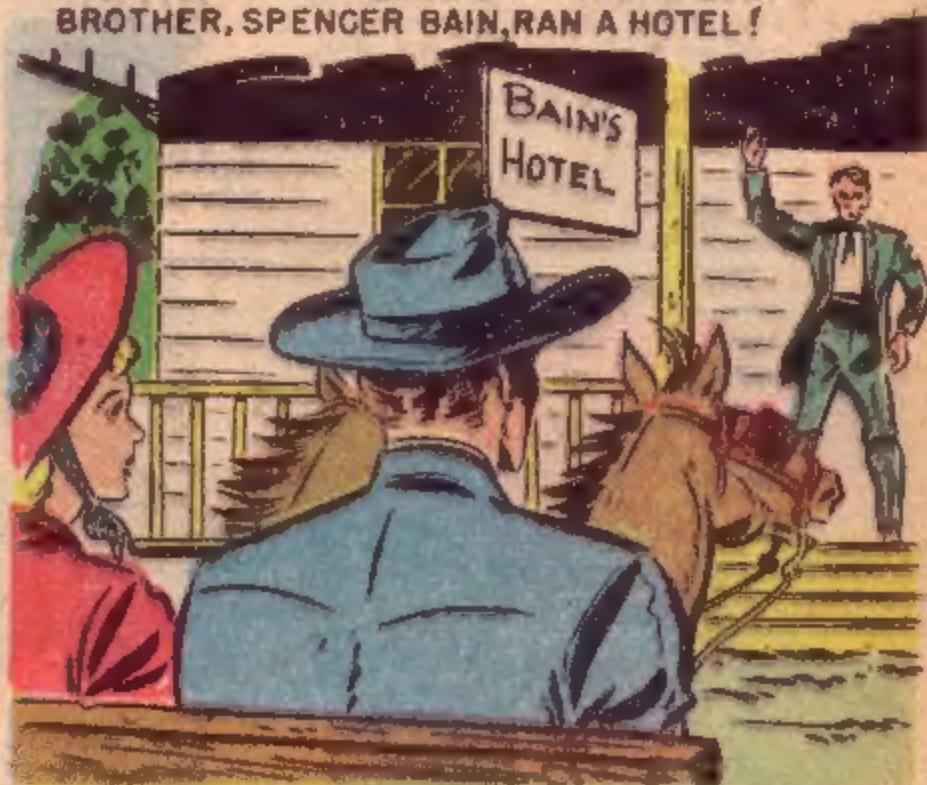
AND, SO THAT YOU'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER, I'M GOING TO TELL YOU ALL MY STORY-- THE STORY OF A MAN WHO KILLED AN INNOCENT PARTY IN COLD BLOOD AND DROVE HIS WIFE TO HER DEATH!



"TWENTY YEARS AGO, I CAME FROM MISSOURI WITH A LOVELY YOUNG WIFE TO MAKE A HOME IN KANSAS!



"WE STOPPED AT DODGE CITY WHERE LUCY'S BROTHER, SPENCER BAIN, RAN A HOTEL!



"BAIN HAD A GAMBLING PARD NAMED CAP FOLSOM... AND MORE THAN ONCE I WATCHED THE PAIR OF THEM FLEECE A STRANGER AT CARDS.



"LUCY THOUGHT THE WORLD OF HER BROTHER... SO MUCH THAT SHE WAS BLIND TO HIS CROOKED NATURE!

ONE DAY I COULDN'T STAND IT ANY LONGER.
AND I CALLED HIM."

YOU'VE GOT TOO MANY
CARDS, YOU TINHORN!



"IT ENDED IN A FIGHT

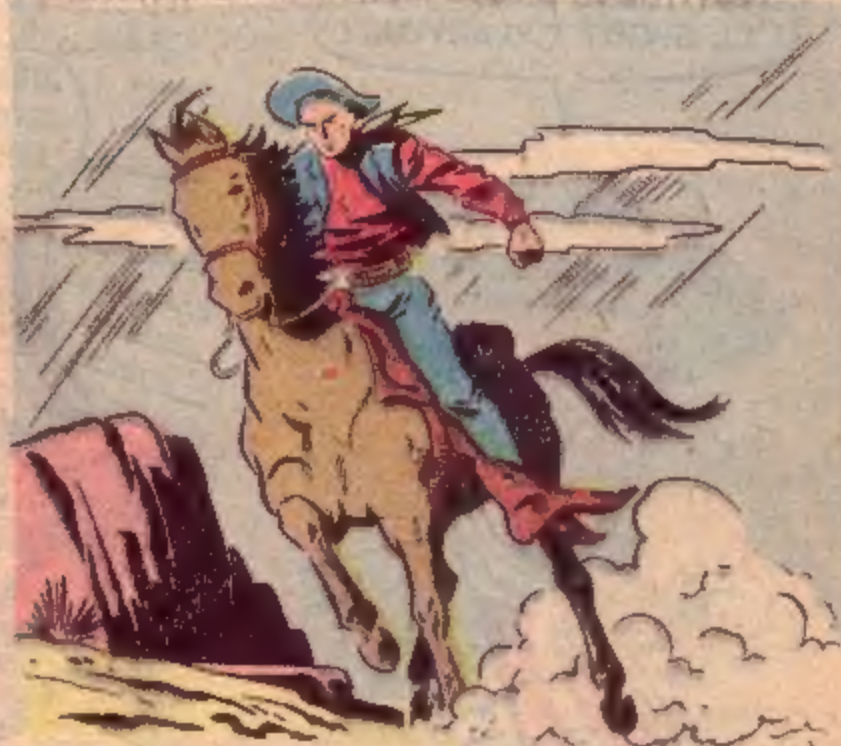


BENT WADE, PUT
DOWN THAT GUN!

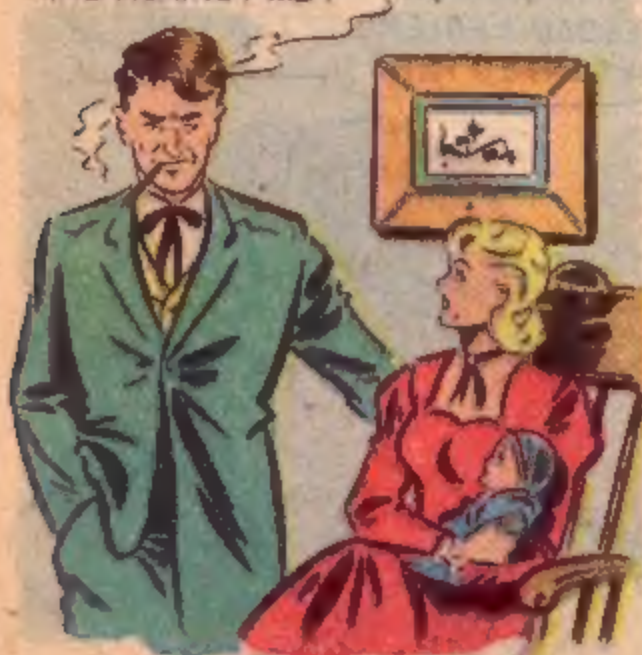


"NOBODY WAS HURT, BUT LUCY BLAMED ME FOR
STIRRING UP TROUBLE!"

"I CLEARED OUT NEXT DAY TO LOOK FOR A JOB
AND A HOME AWAY FROM LUCY'S RELATIVES.



"DURING ONE OF MY LONG ABSENCES
FROM DODGE CITY, MY LITTLE
DAUGHTER WAS BORN-- BUT MEAN-
WHILE, BAIN HAD POISONED LUCY'S
MIND AGAINST ME!



"I NEVER KNEW I WAS A FATHER
TILL I GOT BACK... BAIN
TOLD ME THAT LUCY AND HER
BABY HAD GONE... WITH A GENT
NAMED CAREY!

"SUSPECTING THE WORST, I
TRAILED CAREY AND MY
WIFE.

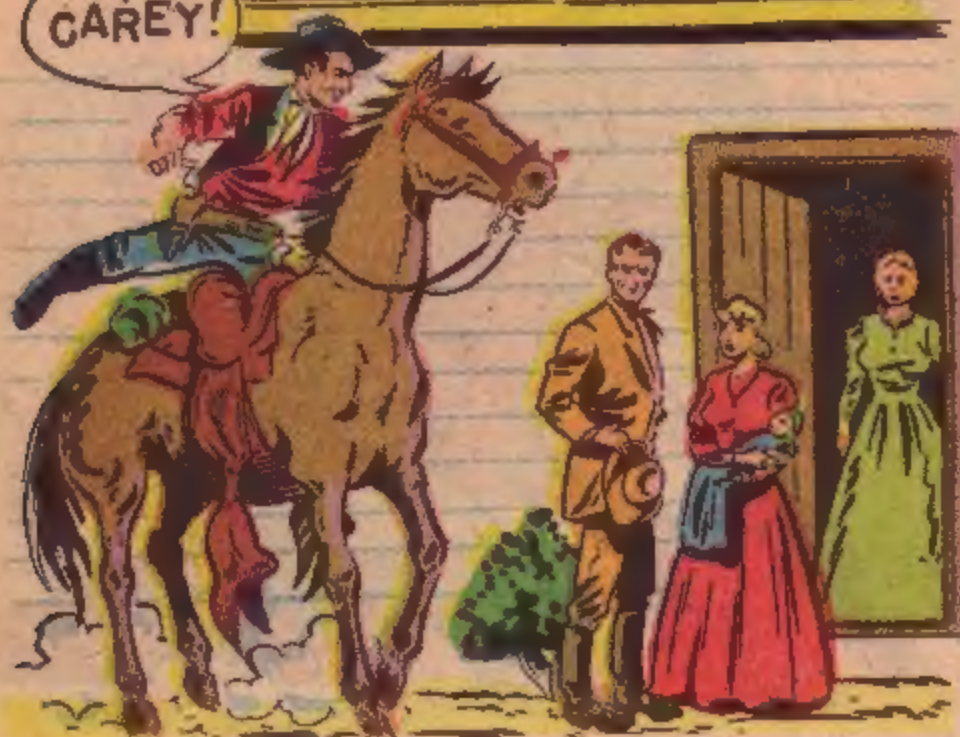


"... TO A TOWN THREE DAYS' RIDE FROM DODGE CITY!"

DRAW YOUR GUN, CAREY--
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!

FOR WHAT?
ARE YOU
CRAZY, WADE?

CAREY!



DRAW, YOU COYOTE -- OR
I'LL SHOOT YOU ANYWAY!

"LUCY'S CRY MAY HAVE SPOILED HIS
DRAW..."

BENT! BENT!
STOP, FOR
HEAVEN'S
SAKE!

"ANYHOW, HE WAS DEAD
BEFORE HE COULD FINISH
IT."



"MINUTES LATER, I HEARD SOMEONE TALKING... IT WAS
THE WOMAN IN WHOSE HOUSE LUCY LIVED!"

YOU'RE A FOOL AND
A MURDERER, BENT WADE!

YOUR WIFE IS AS INNOCENT AS YOUR
BABY DAUGHTER! THE MAN YOU
JUST KILLED HAS BEEN NOTHING
BUT THEIR GOOD FRIEND--- SHE
NEEDED A FRIEND AFTER YOU
DESERTED HER!

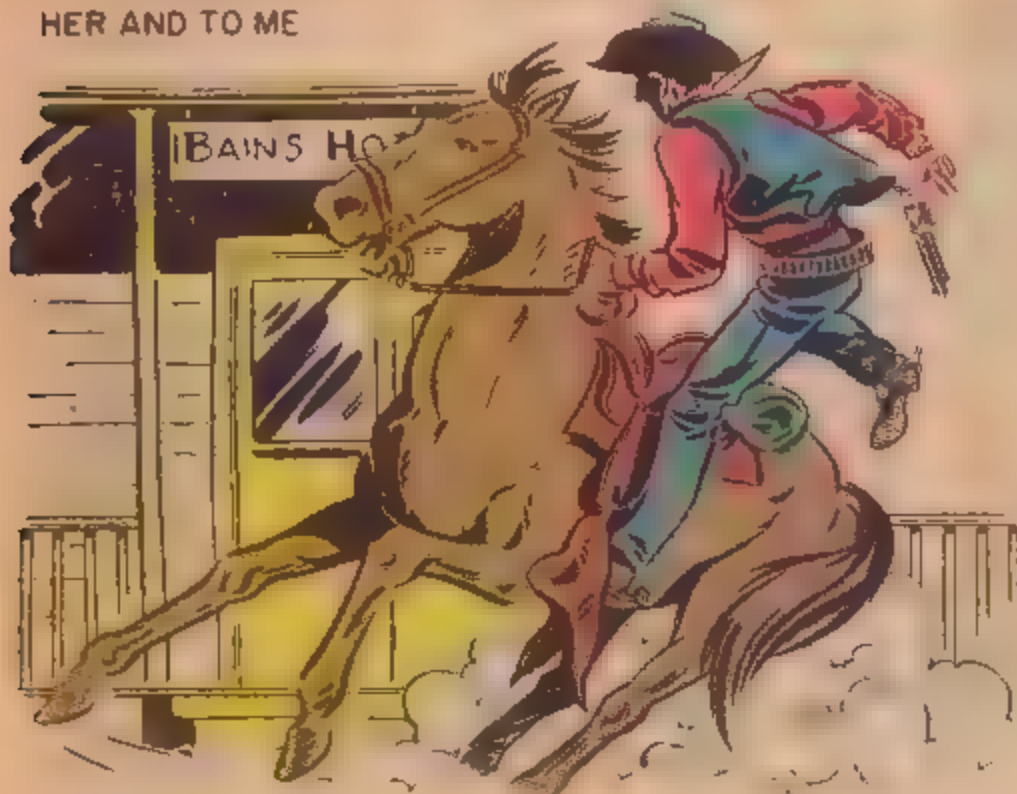


"I COULDN'T FACE LUCY RIGHT THEN' I COULDN'T
FACE MY OWN CONSCIENCE'

"ALL THE DEVILS OF DESPAIR AND REVENGE RODE
WITH ME AS I HEADED FOR DODGE CITY



"...TO HAVE IT OUT WITH THE MEN WHO HAD LIED TO
HER AND TO ME



BUT SPENCER BAIN AND CAP FOLSOM HAD
CLEARED OUT I COULDN'T LEARN WHERE
WITHOUT SLEEP OR REST, I RODE BACK
TO LUCY'S BOARDING PLACE BUT
SHE'D LEFT WITH AN EMIGRANT TRAIN'



HERE'S YOUR GUNS,
BOYS-- I RECKON
YOU'LL BE SAFE
WITH THEM NOW'

I RECKON,
OLD-TIMER'

DID YOU
EVER FIND
YOUR WIFE
AND BABY,
STRANGER?



NOT EVER' THE WAGON
TRAIN WAS WIPED OUT BY
INJUNS--- MEN FOUND
EVERY SOUL DEAD-- BUT
NO TRACE OF THE BABY
GIRL' SO I'M STILL A-
HUNTING FOR HER---



WHAT'S YOUR
HANDLE, STRANGER?

WADE
BENT
WADE--



BENT WADE! -- THUNDER
AND LIGHTNING! WE'RE
IN FOR IT, BOYS!

THAT LIGHTNING
WILL SPOOK
THE CATTLE!

BUM-BUMBLE--
RUMBLE--

BOOM!

THE THUNDER IN THE SKY IS ECHOED BY THE
SUDDEN THUNDER OF COUNTLESS HOOFS

GR-RASH--
RUMBLE--

THE CHUCK WAGON'S
OUR ONLY CHANCE--
THEY'RE HEADING
THIS WAY!

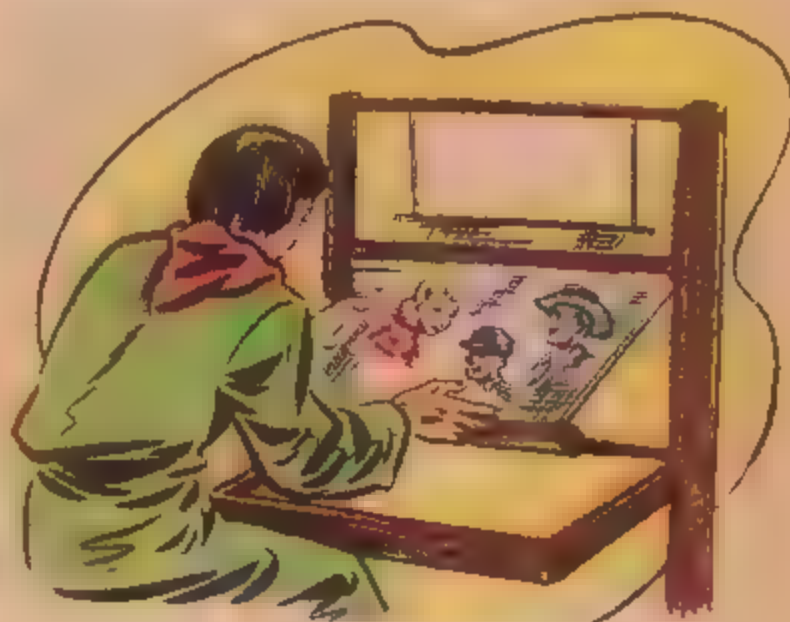
IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN! AND
NOTHING I CAN DO TO HELP--

SHOOT! KEEP
SHOOTING--

THE WAGON'S CRASH IS LOST IN THE ROAR OF THAT LIVING AVALANCHE...



LIFE IS A WEAVER, BRINGING FAR-FLUNG THREADS TOGETHER SEE! UPON HIS BUSY LOOM OUR PATTERN GROWS... TRAGIC OR COMICAL, BEAUTEIOUS OR TERRIBLE, OR DULL AND PLAIN



FROM THE STATE PENITENTIARY COMES ONE OF THE STRANGE THREADS, SOON TO ENTER THE LIFE-PATTERN OF BENT WADE...



YOU--- NUMBER 806--- STEP OUT!



MY TIME'S UP! AFTER TODAY, NO MORE SCREWS--

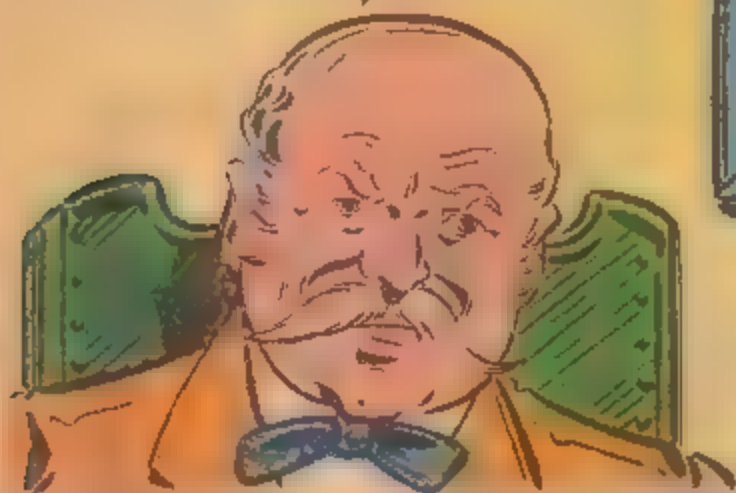
QUIET! YOU'LL FIND CLOTHES IN YOUR CELL--- THEN THE WARDEN WANTS TO SEE YOU!

... THREE YEARS, JACK BELLOUNDS! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN HERE THAT LONG IF YOU'D CONTROLLED YOUR TEMPER--- WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, NOW THAT YOU'RE LEAVING US?

NOTHING-- -- EXCEPT THAT I'LL BE A FREE MAN THE MINUTE I'M OUTSIDE!



BELLOUNDS, A SPOILED CHILD THINKS HE IS FREE WHEN A TANTRUM DRIVES HIM TO SCREAM AND DESTROY THINGS --- FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, IF NOT FOR OTHERS --- BE A MAN!



FREE! AND I WON'T BE STUFFED WITH ANY MORE OF THAT SOLEMN, OLD GOAT'S ADVICE OR ANYBODY'S!

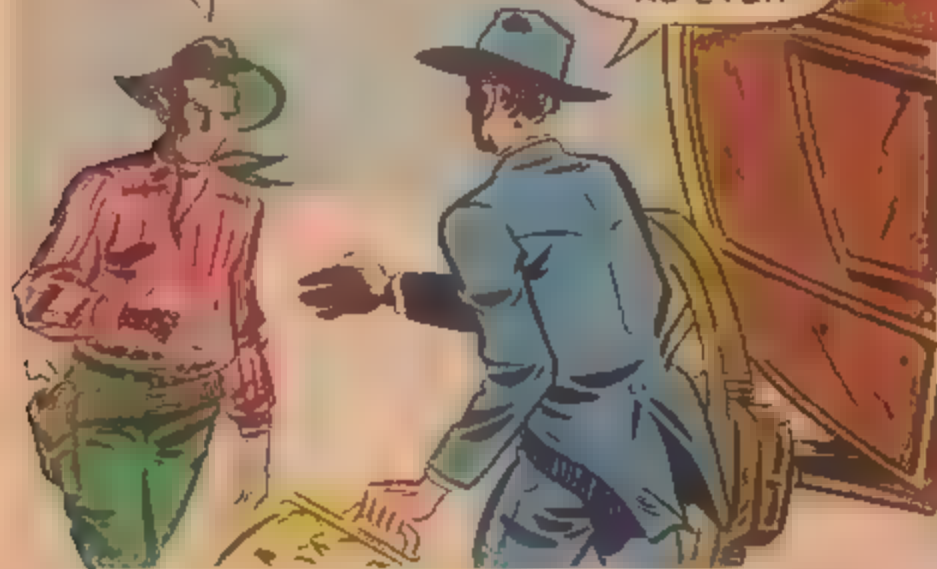
CLANG!



AT KREMMLING, THE NEXT DAY.

JACK BELLOUNDS, YUH OL' CURLY WOLF! HOW YUH BEEN?

HI-YAH, BERT LORRY! IS THE OLD TOWN AS DEAD AS EVER?



I'M ON MY WAY TO WHITESLIDES, BUT I'VE GOT SOME TIME TO KILL, BERT!

LET'S HAVE A DRINK AND FIGGER HOW TO DO A FANCY JOB OF IT!



LEAVE IT! WE WANT ANOTHER DRINK!

BETTER NOT, JACK YOU'VE HAD TOO MUCH!

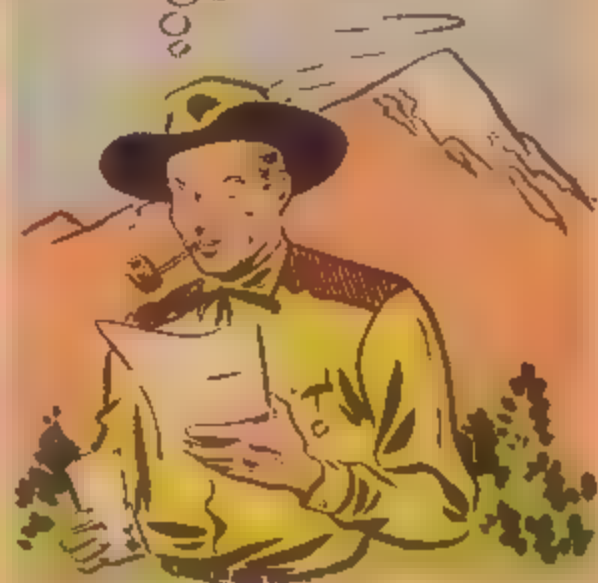
GIMME-- OR I'LL KILL YUH!

O--OKAY TAKE IT! NO OFFENSE---



THAT SAME DAY, AT HIS RANCH UNDER THE SLOPE OF OLD WHITESLIDES, BILL BELLOUNDS RECEIVES A LETTER...

IT'S FROM THE WARDEN! HE SAYS--- HE SAYS JACK-- WILL BE COMING HOME! MY BOY--- HE'LL BE HOME TOMORROW!



COLLIE! C'M HERE!
I'VE GOT GREAT NEWS!

NEWS? OH, DAD!
YOU MEAN JACK IS
COMING HOME?

DAD! I'M SO GLAD---
ESPECIALLY FOR YOU!
YOU'VE MISSED HIM
TERRIBLY!

I HAVE, COLLIE---
AND I'M KIND OF
SURPRISED THAT
YOU HAVEN'T,
SEEING YOU TWO
WERE ALWAYS TOGETHER
UNTIL HE WENT--- UH---
WENT AWAY!

COME INSIDE, GIRL! I---
I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO
TELL YOU-- SOMETHING
I NEVER TOLD YOU
BEFORE!

OH! SOUNDS
AWFULLY
MYSTERIOUS---
IS IT ABOUT WHAT
JACK'S BEEN DOING
ALL THIS TIME HE'S
BEEN AWAY, DAD?

COLLIE, I--- I DON'T KNOW
HOW TO BEGIN--- BUT THE
TIME'S COME WHEN YOU
HAVE GOT TO KNOW-- I M
NOT YOUR REAL DAD!

YOU--- YOU---
I DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU MEAN!

LISTEN, HONEY! IT'S A SAD
STORY, BUT A SHORT ONE---
SOME MEN THAT WERE
WORKING ONE OF MY MINING
CLAIMS IN THE MOUNTAINS
FOUND YOU SEVENTEEN
YEARS AGO--- YOUR FOLKS
DIED WHEN THE INJUNS
'WIPED OUT A WAGON
TRAIN!

AND YOU BROUGHT
ME UP AS YOUR
VERY OWN! OH,
DAD-- I LOVE YOU
ALL THE MORE
FOR THAT!

I'M GLAD,
COLUMBINE--
MIGHTY GLAD!
BECAUSE
THEN YOU
WON'T REFUSE
THE ONE BIG THING
I'VE EVER ASKED
YOU-- I WANT YOU
AND JACK TO
MARRY--- SOON!

MARRY--- MARRY
JACK? BUT, DAD--
I DON'T LOVE HIM!

NEXT MORNING..

WELL, BOYS, HERE COMES THE
FIRE-EATIN' HEIR OF WHITESLIDES
RANCH, JACK BELLOUNDS!

FIRE-DRINKIN' YOU MEAN, LEM---
SOMEBODY CARTED HIM HOME LAST
NIGHT IN A BUCKBOARD! HE AIN'T
CHANGED ANY!

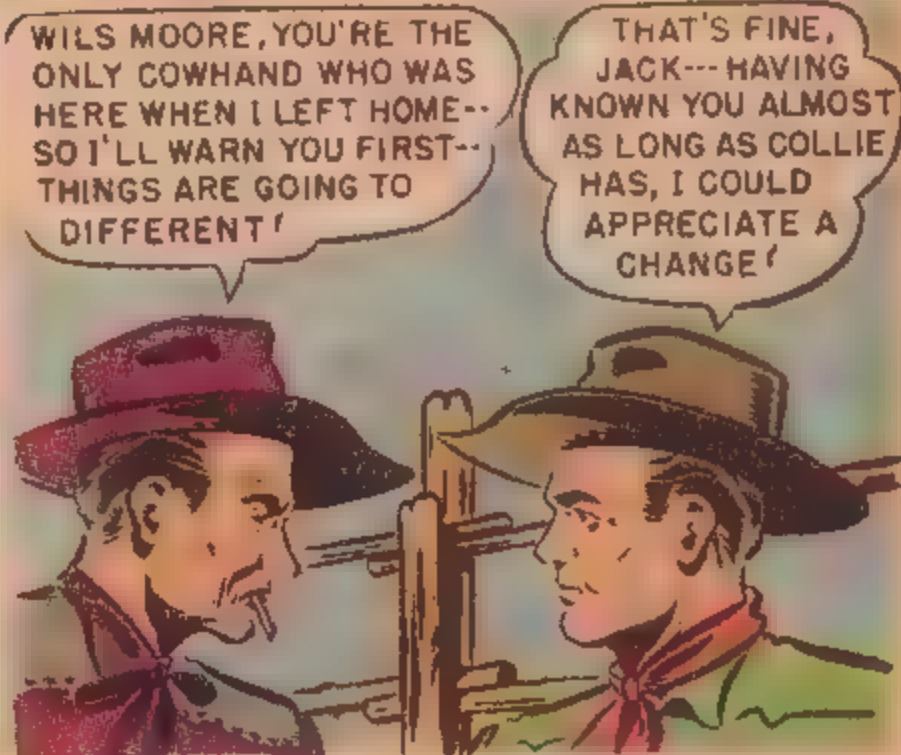
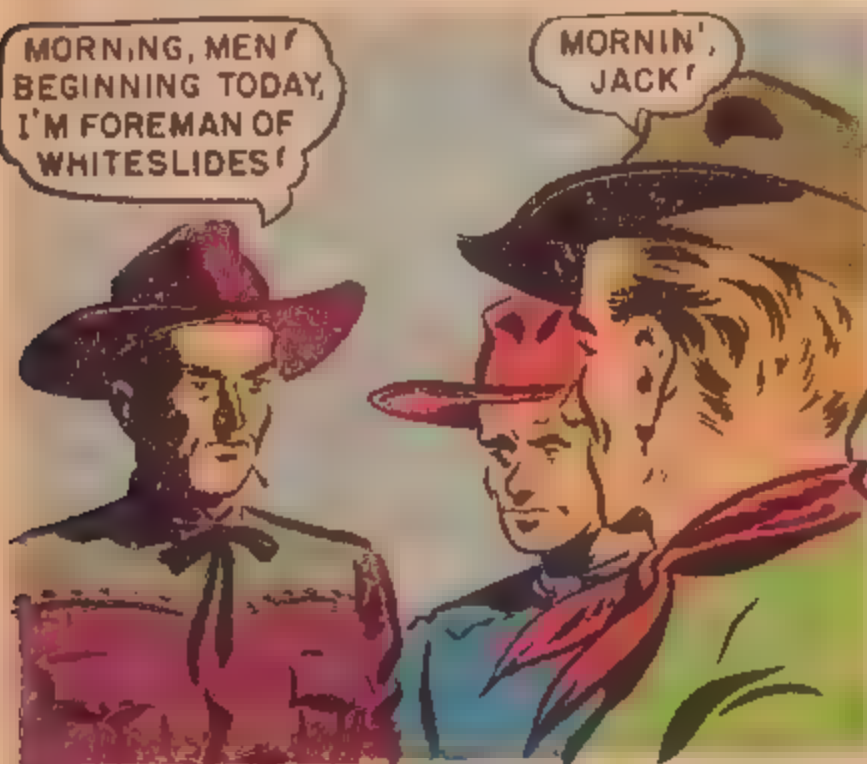


MORNING, MEN!
BEGINNING TODAY,
I'M FOREMAN OF
WHITESLIDES!

MORNIN',
JACK!

WILS MOORE, YOU'RE THE
ONLY COWHAND WHO WAS
HERE WHEN I LEFT HOME--
SO I'LL WARN YOU FIRST--
THINGS ARE GOING TO
DIFFERENT!

THAT'S FINE,
JACK--- HAVING
KNOWN YOU ALMOST
AS LONG AS COLLIE
HAS, I COULD
APPRECIATE A
CHANGE!



DON'T GET THE IDEA YOU CAN
IMPOSE ON 'OLD TIMES', COW-
BOY! I'LL HIRE AND I'LL
FIRE, REGARDLESS--- AND
MY RIDERS ARE GOING TO
WORK-- NOT STAND AROUND
HOLDING UP THE CORRAL
RAILS!

WHOSE HALF-BROKE
CAYUSE IS **THIS**!
STAND STILL, YOU!

I SAID **STAND!**---
YOU WALLEYED
JACKASS! I'LL
TEACH YOU!





BOYS! JACK! WHAT
IN THUNDERATION IS
GOING ON HERE?



GIVE ME THAT, YOU
HYDROPHOBIA PUP! I
HOPED IT WOULD MAKE
A MAN OF YOU TO---
TO BE AWAY---



GET INTO THE HOUSE! AND
DON'T LET ME--OR ANYBODY--
SEE YOUR FACE TILL YOU'VE
COME TO YOUR SENSES! GIT!

AAAARGH--



WHOSE GUN
IS THIS?

IT'S JIM BLUDSOE'S, BOSS--
BUSTER JACK GRABBED IT
TO SHOOT WILS MOORE--
AND DANGED NEAR DID!



WHAT WAS
THE RUCKUS
ABOUT, JIM?

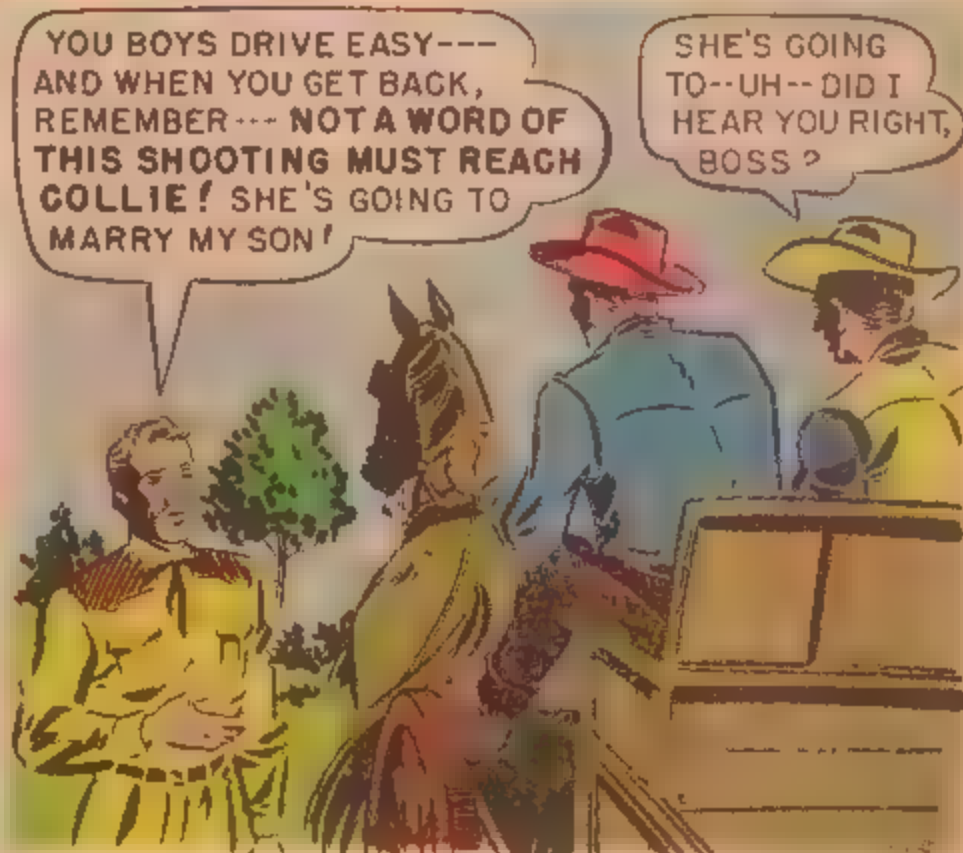
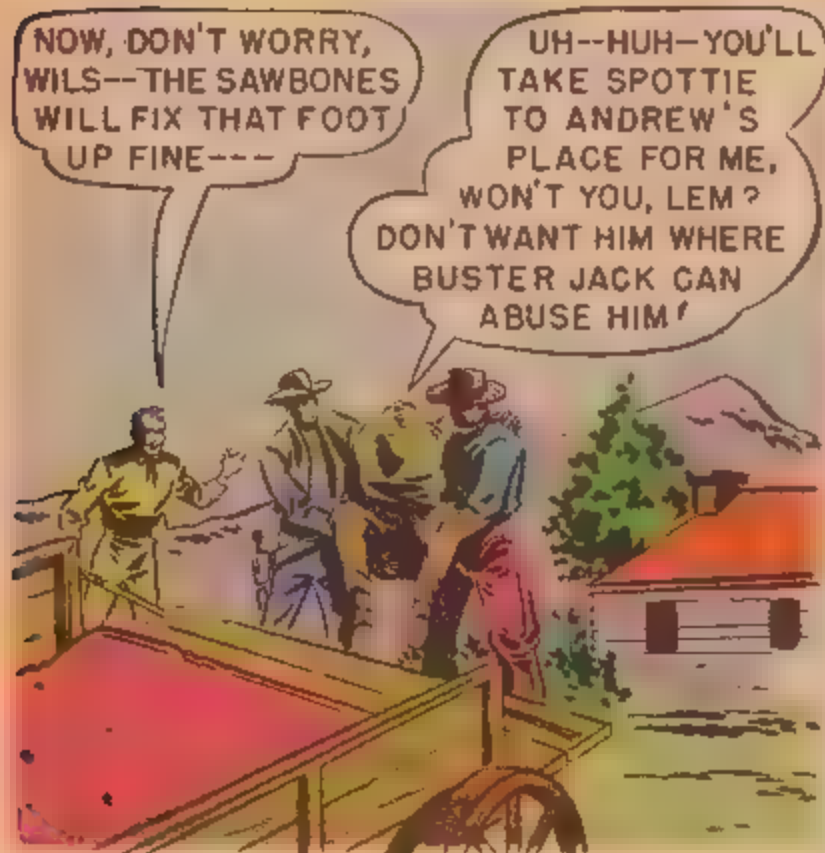
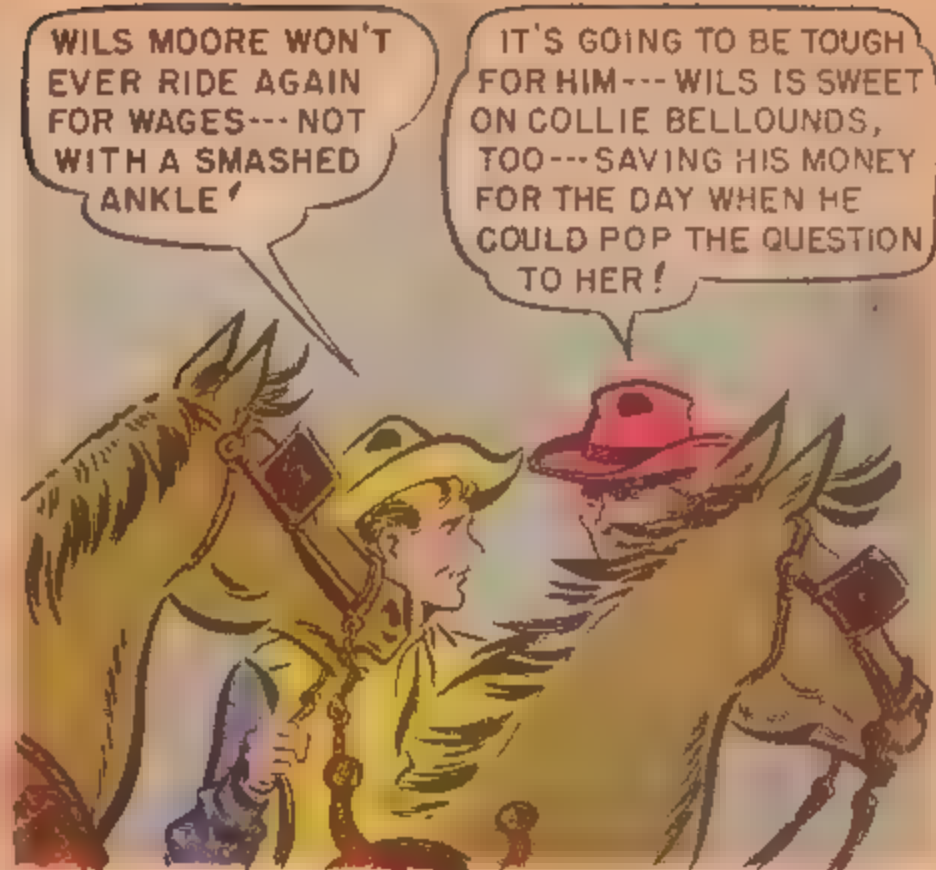
WILSON'S HOSS---
JACK STARTED TO
TAKE OUT HIS MAD
ON SPOTTIE, AND
WILS TOLD HIM TO
QUIT IT-- THEN JACK
SWUNG ON HIM--- AND
GOT KNOCKED BACK---
THAT'S WHEN JACK
GRABBED MY GUN,
AND ALMOST---

WILS!
WHAT--?

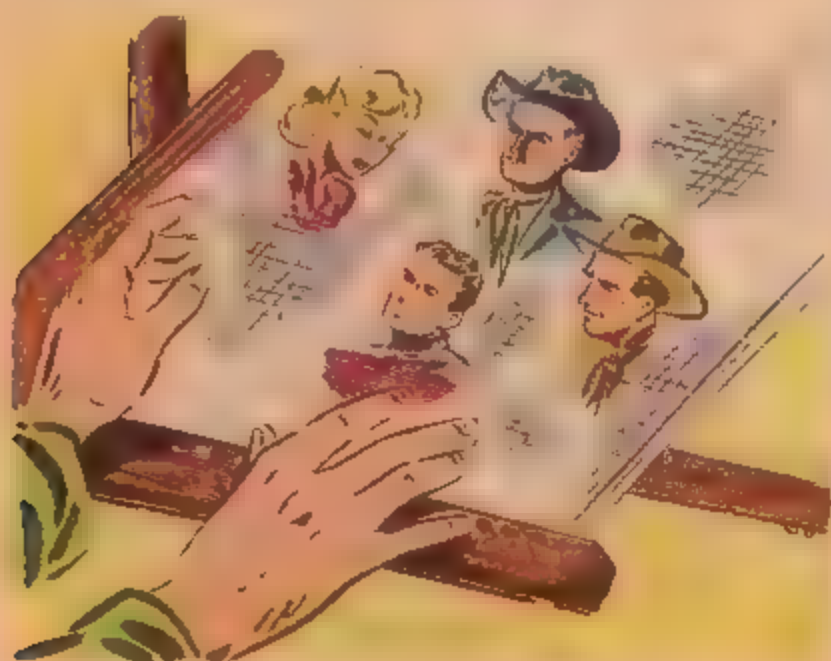
HE WAS
HIT!

IT'S HIS FOOT!
BULLET DRILLED
PLUMB THROUGH
THE ANKLE BONE!





THE SHUTTLE FLASHES, AND EACH SEPARATE STRAND IS BOUND FOREVER IN THE WEAVER'S WEB ..



ON THE DAY OF WILS MOORE'S SHOOTING, BENT WADE'S LONG QUEST BRINGS HIM TO CRIPPLE CREEK .



HOWDY, GENTS ' I HEARD THAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR A CAMP COOK, AND I FIGGERED I MIGHT QUALIFY '

IF YOU'RE ANY KIND OF A COOK, YOU SURE CAN, MISTER !

PANNIN' GOLD IS HARD WORK--AND WE BEEN LIVIN' ON NOTHIN' BUT BEANS !

THEN MAYBE SOME JUICY DEER STEAKS WOULDN'T TASTE TOO BAD-- I KILLED THIS BUCK AT SUNUP !

COME AND GET IT, GENTS !

YEOW ! WE EAT, BOYS !

I COULD EAT A STEER !

DEER STEAK AND ONIONS !
UMMMM !

WILD ONIONS, GENTS... AND WATCH OUT FOR THESE BISCUITS-- THEY'RE HOT !

SAVE SOME OF THE BISCUITS TO EAT WITH THIS SYRUP -- I BROUGHT IT FROM TOWN TO GIVE YOU A LICK OF SWEET !

WADE-- YOU'RE WORTH YOUR WEIGHT IN GOLD !

MEBBE YOU WON'T THINK SO, LATER ON, GENTS --- BAD LUCK RIDES MY TRAIL, AND I NEVER KNOW WHEN, OR WHERE, OR WHO IT WILL STRIKE !

BOYS, NOW THAT BENT WADE IS HERE TO SEE NOBODY JUMPS OUR CLAIMS, WE CAN TAKE A TRIP TO TOWN AND BANK OUR GOLD DUST!

GOOD IDEA, ROCHE--

WE GOT A SCALE HERE--- LET'S DIVIDE UP THE DUST TONIGHT, AND EACH MAN PACK HIS OWN WHEN WE TAKE THE STAGE FOR TOWN TOMORROW!

COULDN'T THE BANK WEIGH THE WHOLE LOT AND FIGGER THE FIVE PARTS EASIER, KLINGER? NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF MY BUSINESS---

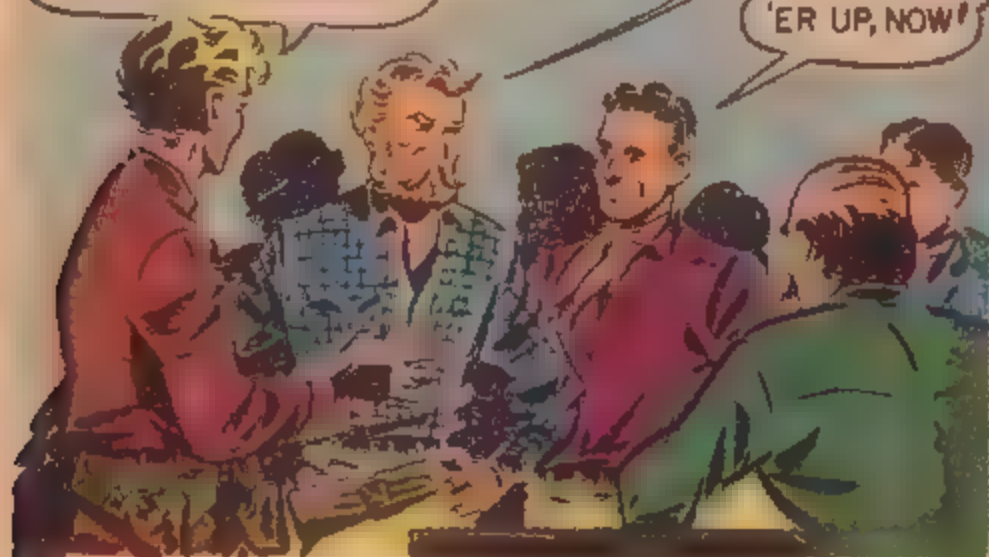


THAT AIN'T WHAT I WAS THINKING OF, BOYS-- IT'S THE CHANCE WE MIGHT BE HELD UP ON THE WAY TO TOWN-- WITH EACH MAN HIDING HIS OWN DUST IN HIS BOOTS OR CLOTHES, IT WOULD BE SAFER!

MAYBE KLINGER'S RIGHT---WHAT DO YOU SAY, BOYS?

LET'S SPLIT 'ER UP, NOW!

THAT'S THE LAST OF IT--- AND SHE TOTALS TWO HUNDRED FORTY-ONE OUNCES THAT'S FORTY-EIGHT AND ONE FIFTH OUNCES APIECE! NOT BAD FOR SIX WEEKS WORK, PARTNERS!



I'LL PUT MINE IN MY BOOT--

JUST A SECOND, KLINGER!

WHAT'S THE IDEA, ROCHE, STOPPING ME--

TWO IDEAS, KLINGER--- AND THEY STRUCK ME BOTH AT ONCE! FIRST, YOU SUGGESTED THIS DIVISION SECOND, YOU'VE BEEN WALKING AS IF YOUR BOOTS WERE TOO HEAVY!





WHY, YOU DIRTY--



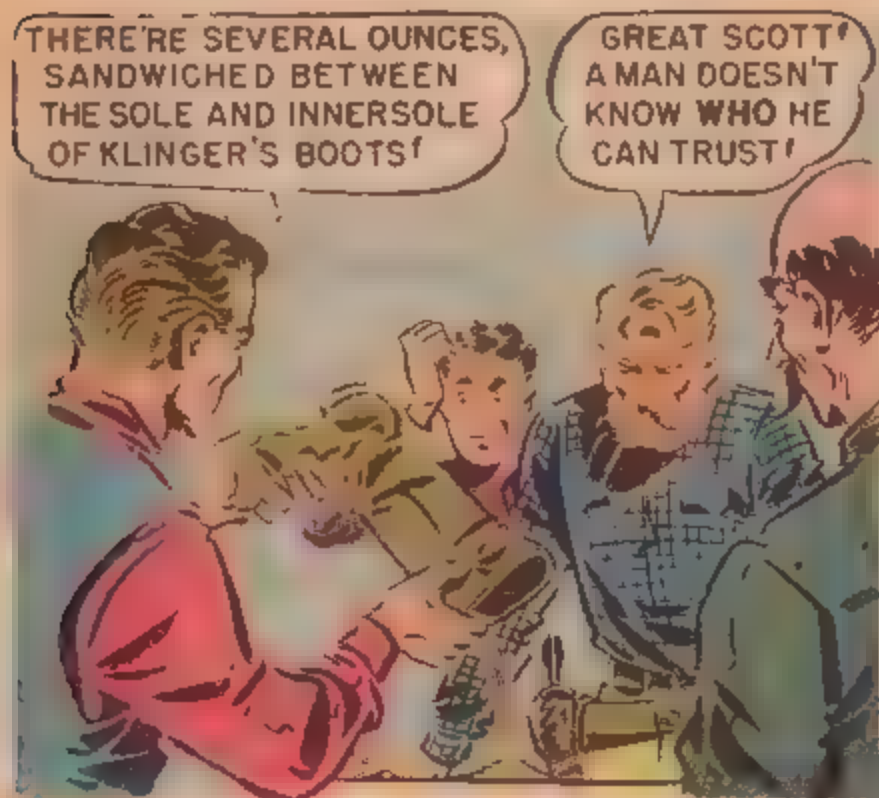
YOU ASKED FOR IT, KLINGER-- BUT I'M SORRY YOU DID!

(COUGH!)
YOU'VE-- YOU'VE
KILLED ME---
ROCHE!



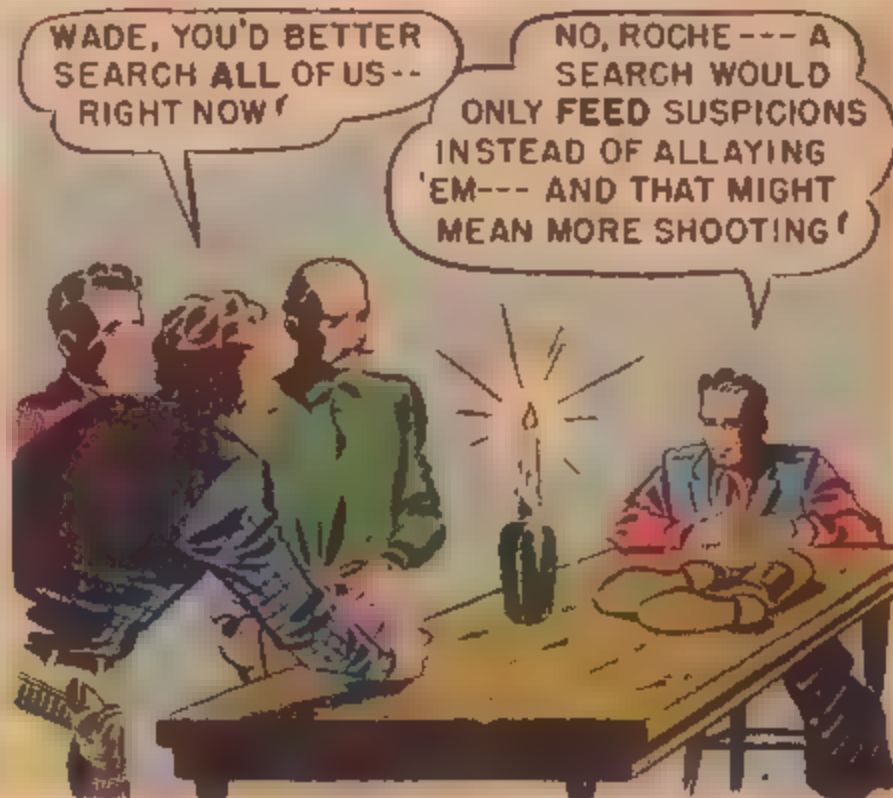
IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME, GENTS, I'LL SEE WHAT DID MAKE KLINGER WALK THAT WAY--- I NOTICED IT, TOO!

GO AHEAD, WADE!



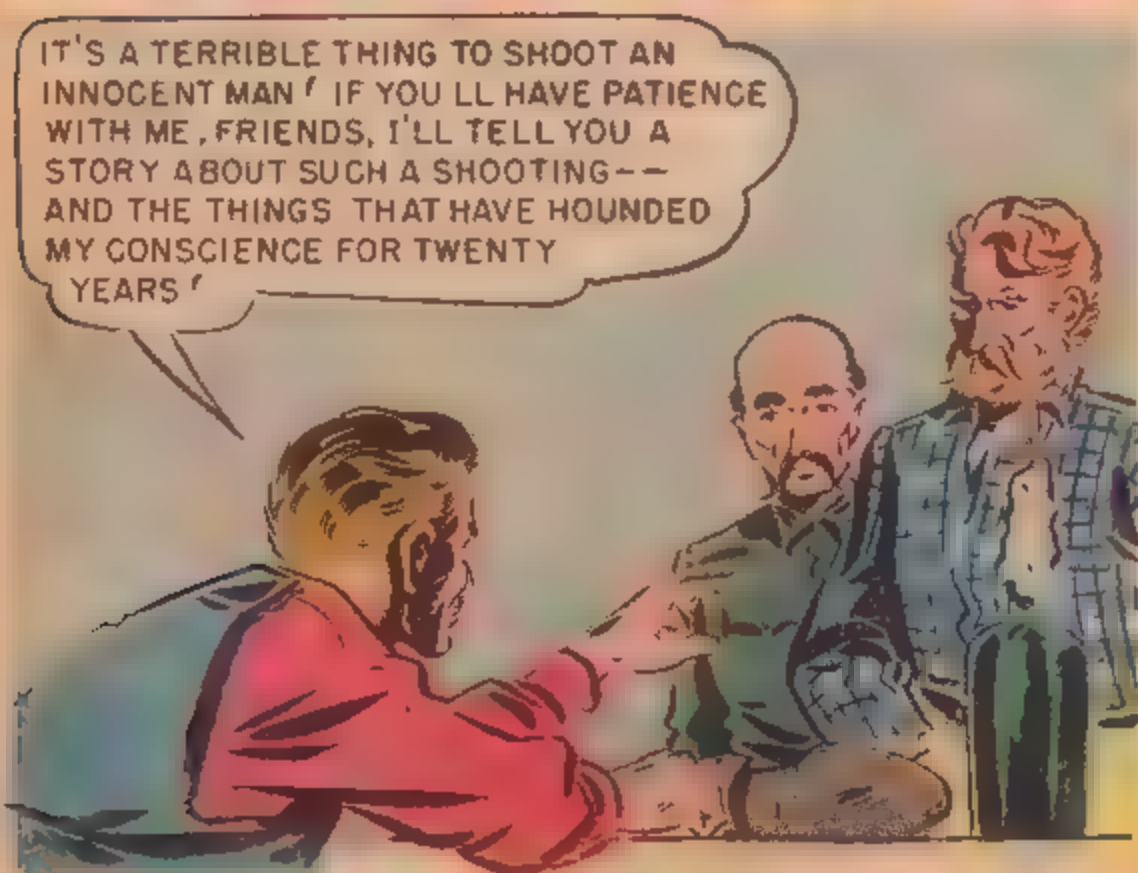
THERE'RE SEVERAL OUNCES, SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE SOLE AND INNERSOLE OF KLINGER'S BOOTS!

GREAT SCOTT! A MAN DOESN'T KNOW WHO HE CAN TRUST!

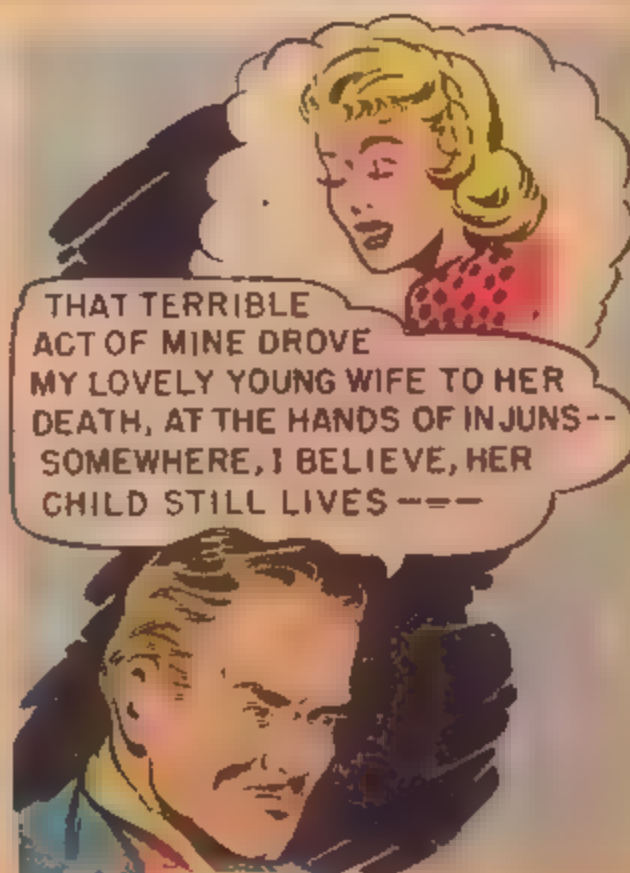


WADE, YOU'D BETTER SEARCH ALL OF US-- RIGHT NOW!

NO, ROCHE--- A SEARCH WOULD ONLY FEED SUSPICIONS INSTEAD OF ALLAYING 'EM--- AND THAT MIGHT MEAN MORE SHOOTING!



IT'S A TERRIBLE THING TO SHOOT AN INNOCENT MAN! IF YOU'LL HAVE PATIENCE WITH ME, FRIENDS, I'LL TELL YOU A STORY ABOUT SUCH A SHOOTING-- AND THE THINGS THAT HAVE HOUNDED MY CONSCIENCE FOR TWENTY YEARS!



THAT TERRIBLE ACT OF MINE DROVE MY LOVELY YOUNG WIFE TO HER DEATH, AT THE HANDS OF INJUNS-- SOMEWHERE, I BELIEVE, HER CHILD STILL LIVES---

I HAD A QUEER FEELING, GENTS---
THAT I MIGHT NOT HAVE ANOTHER
CHANCE TO ASK YOU--IF YOU'VE
EVER HEARD OF SUCH A
FOUNDLING CHILD---



I HAVEN'T--- THAT'S A
TERRIBLE STORY, BENT
WADE--- AND I RECKON WE'LL ALL
BE GLAD WHEN WE REACH THE END
OF THE STAGE LINE WITH OUR GOLD
TOMORROW! NOW, LET'S GET OUR
SHOVELS, AND PLANT KLINGER!



MORNING

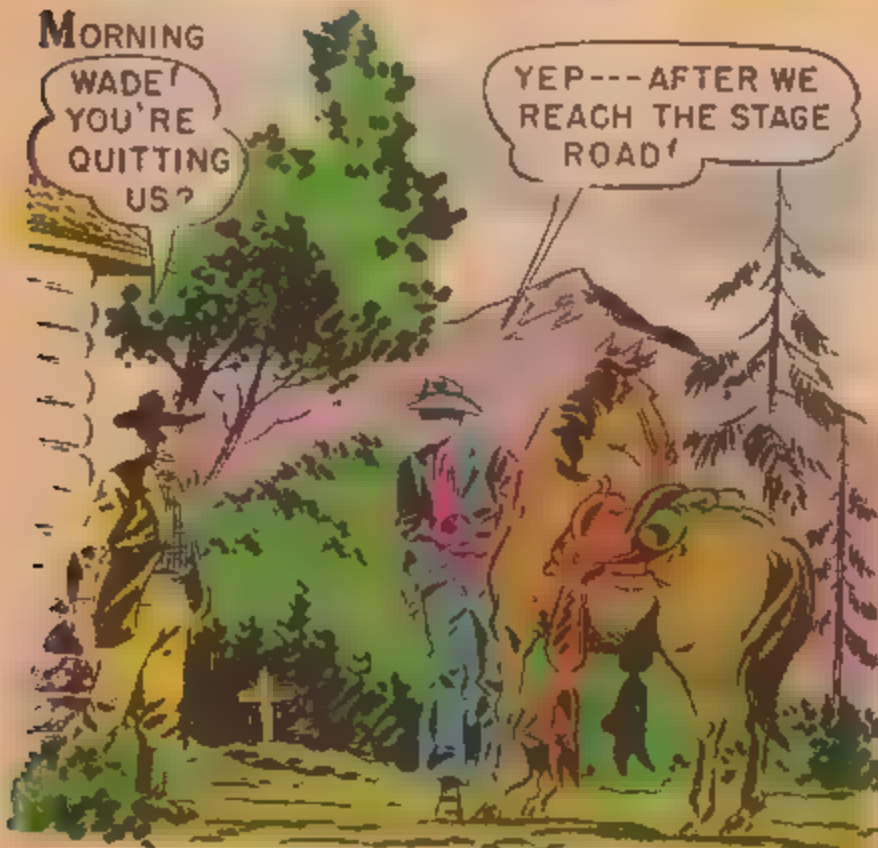
WADE!
YOU'RE
QUITTING
US?

YEP--- AFTER WE
REACH THE STAGE
ROAD!

STAY WITH US, WADE,
AND WE'LL GIVE YOU
KLINGER'S SHARE
OF THE DUST---

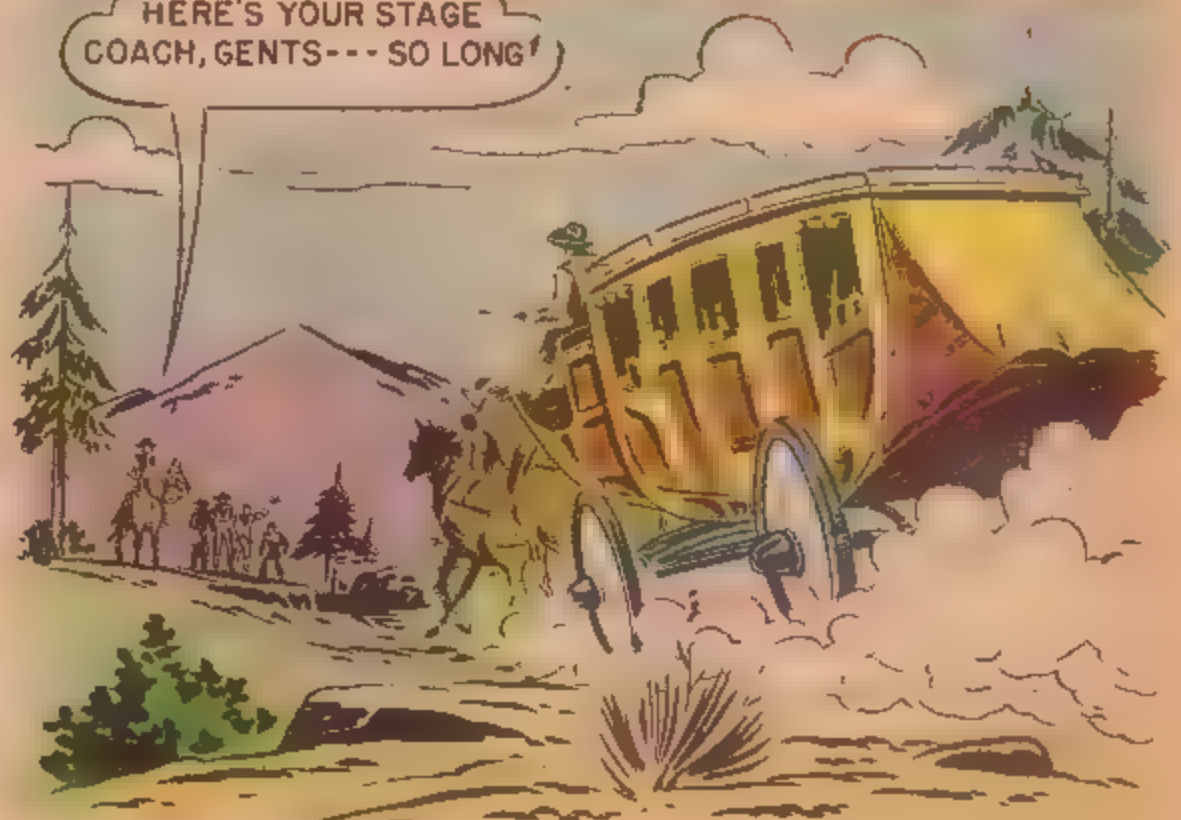
--- AND JUST ABOUT
ANYTHING ELSE YOU
ASK! WE NEED A
COOK THAT BAD!

THANKS, GENTLEMEN.
YOU'RE OFFERING MORE
THAN I DESERVE---



--- BUT IT'S NO USE!
THE OLD TRAIL IS CALLING
TO ME, AND I'VE GOT TO
BE RIDING ON!

HERE'S YOUR STAGE
COACH, GENTS--- SO LONG!



I'VE GOT A QUEER HUNCH!
MEBBE I SHOULD HAVE TOLD
'EM ABOUT THE STRANGE
TRACKS I FOUND UNDER THE
CABIN WINDOW THIS MORNING---

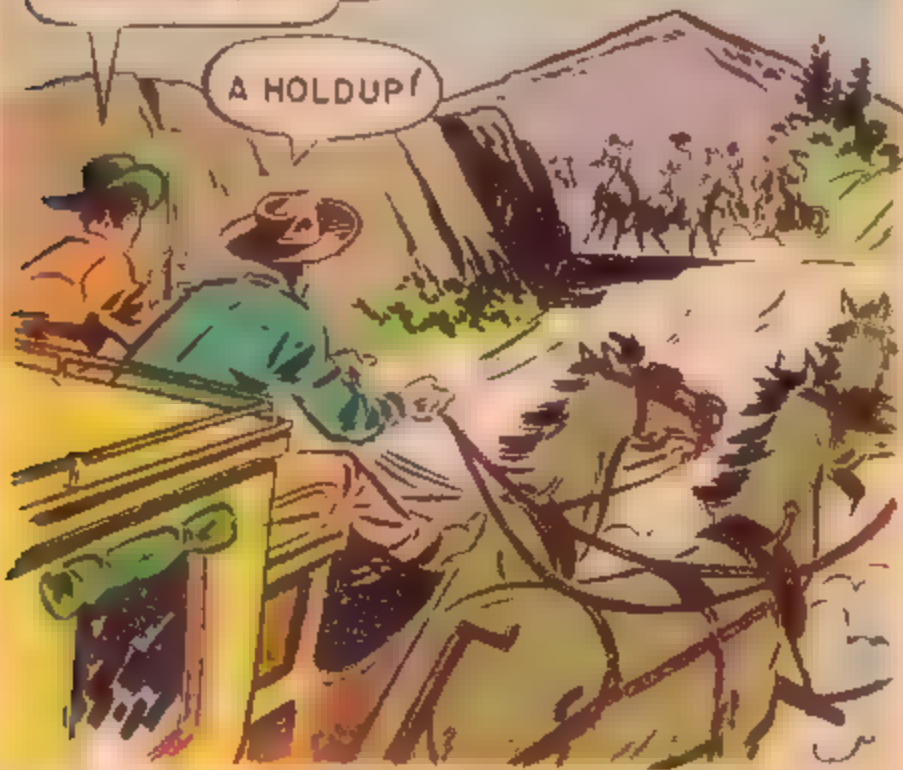


I'M GOING TO FOLLOW
THAT STAGE, SO IF ANYTHING
DOES HAPPEN---



DON'T STOP--WE'LL
FIGHT 'EM OFF!

A HOLDUP!



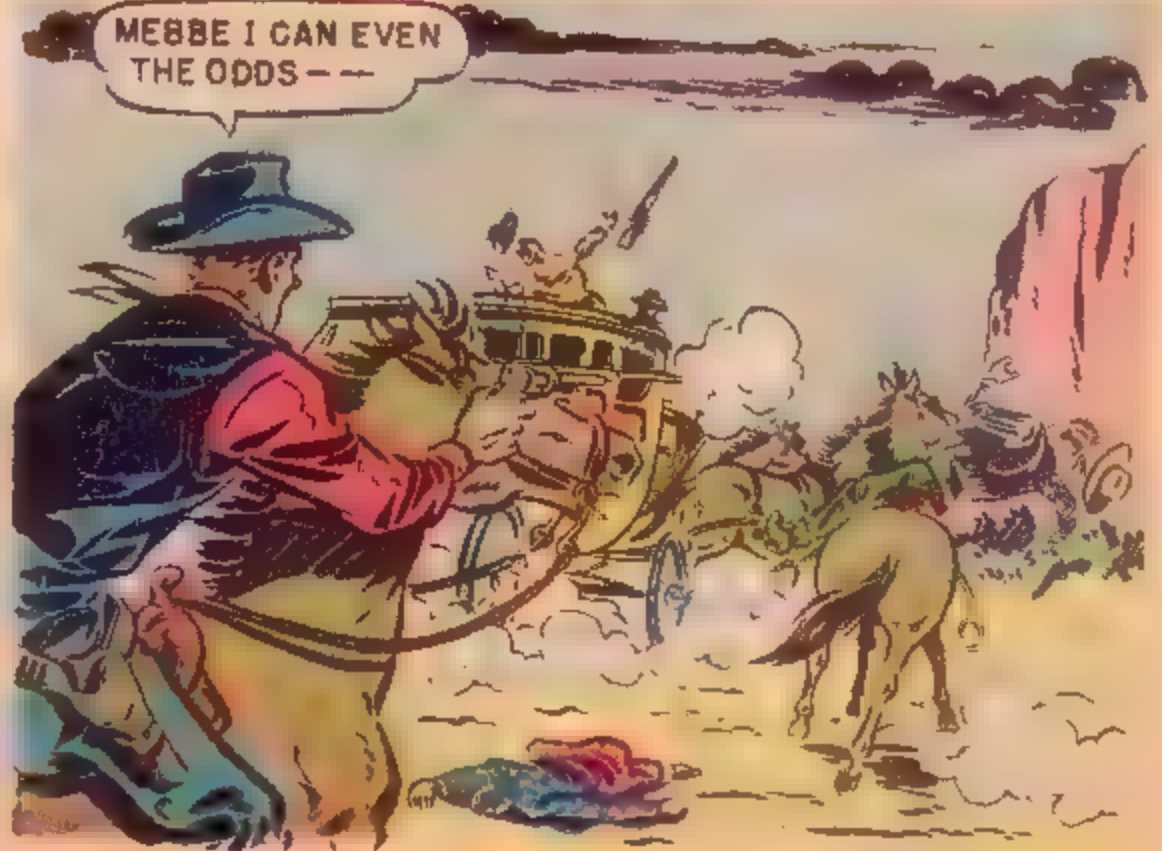
YI-EEEE!



I KNEW IT! GUNFIRE AHEAD!
IT'S THE LUCK THAT DOGS
MY TRAIL!



MEBBE I CAN EVEN
THE ODDS---

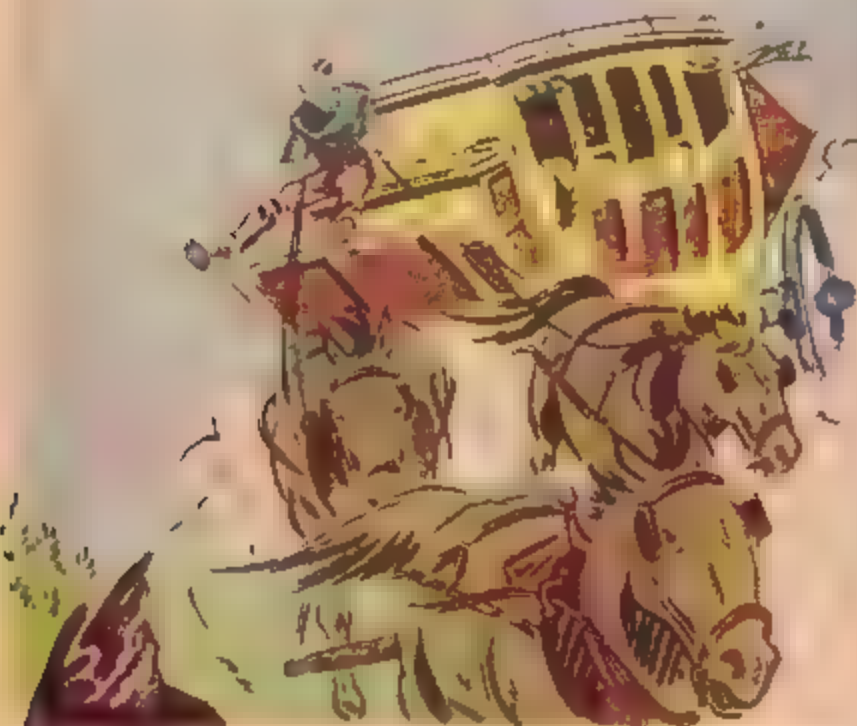




THAT'S THE LAST OF 'EM---
AND IT'LL BE THE LAST OF THE
STAGE COACH IF I DON'T
CATCH IT QUICK!



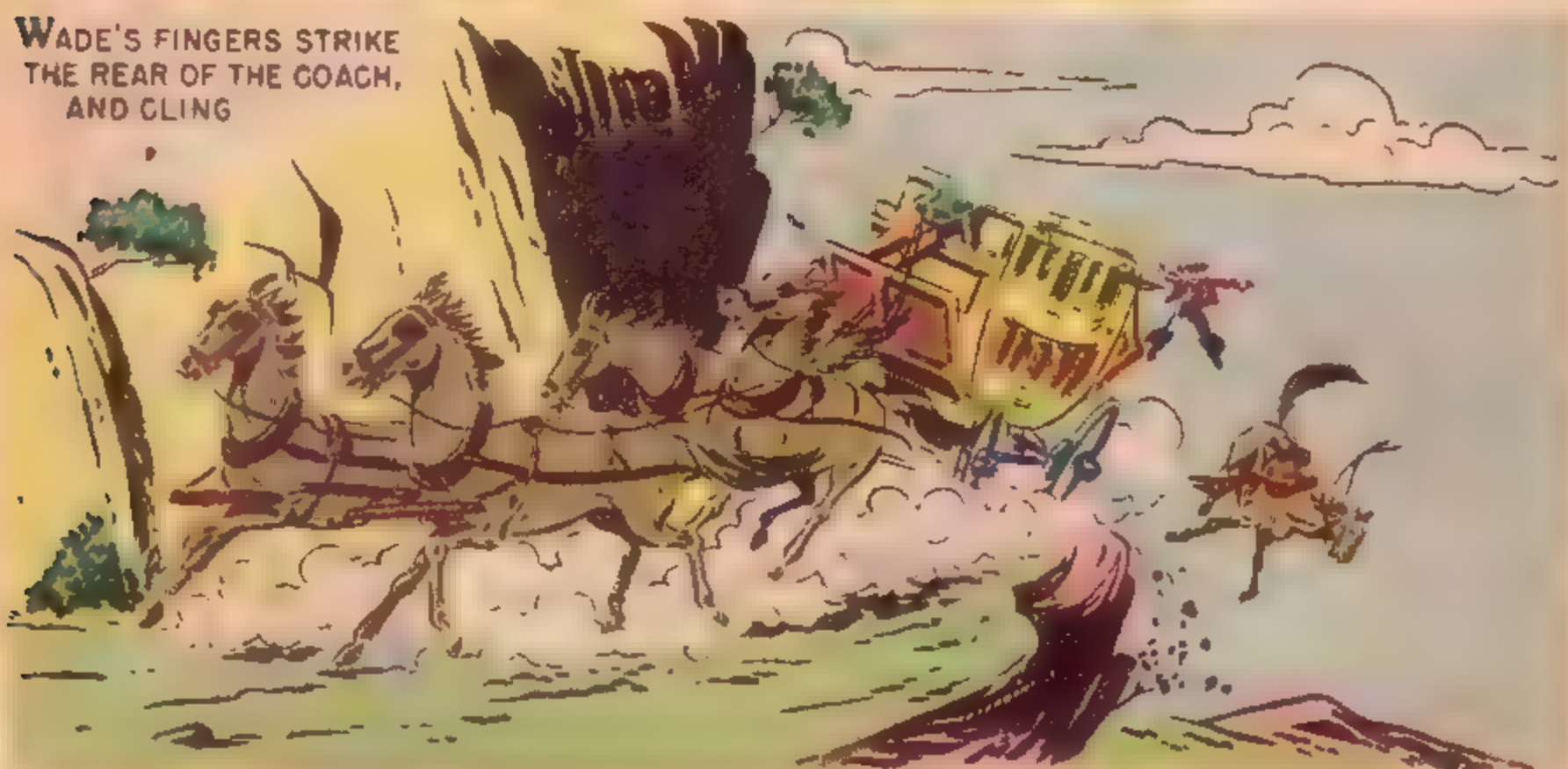
THE STAGE ROCKETS INTO A CANYON TRAIL



THAT DRIVER IS DONE
FOR! I'VE GOT TO REACH
HIM BEFORE---



WADE'S FINGERS STRIKE
THE REAR OF THE COACH,
AND CLING



GOT YOU, FRIEND --
GIVE ME THE REINS!

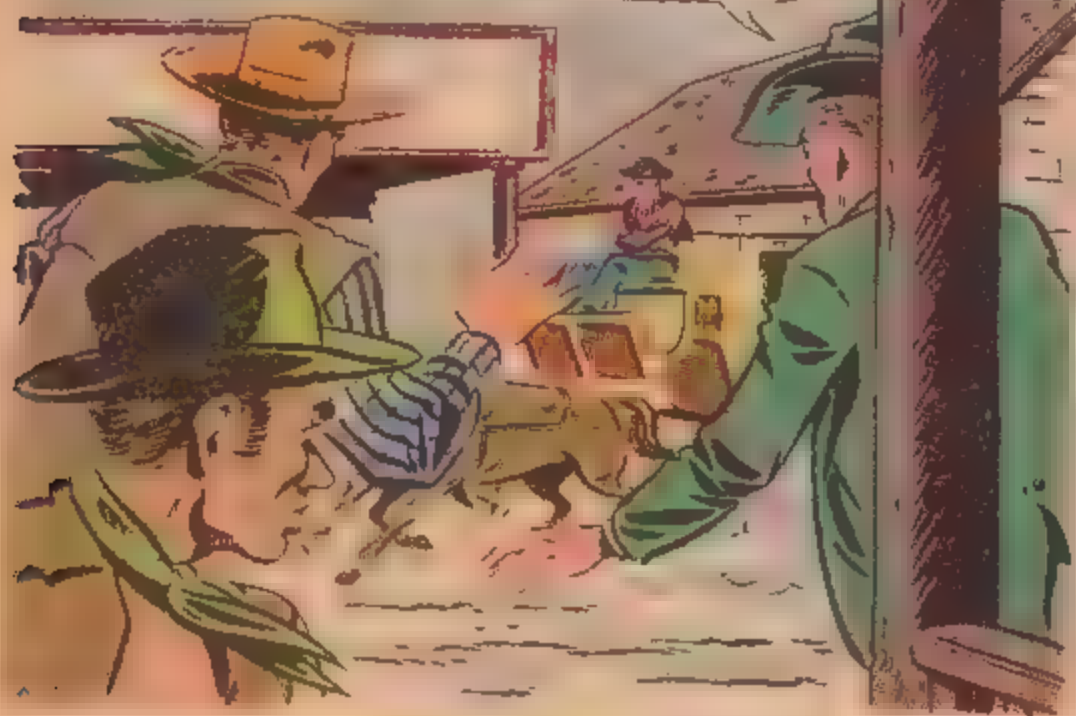


WHOA-A! EASY--- EASY!
WHOA--A--A!



IT'S THE CRIPPLE
CREEK STAGE --

-- WITH A STRANGER
DRIVING! SOMETHING'S
HAPPENED!



WHERE'S HANK MOSS,
THE DRIVER -- AND
BILL EMRY?
WHAT ---

DRIVER IS
INSIDE!
SHERIFF -- THE
GUARD IS BACK ON
THE CRIPPLE CREEK
ROAD, FULL OF
BULLET HOLES!



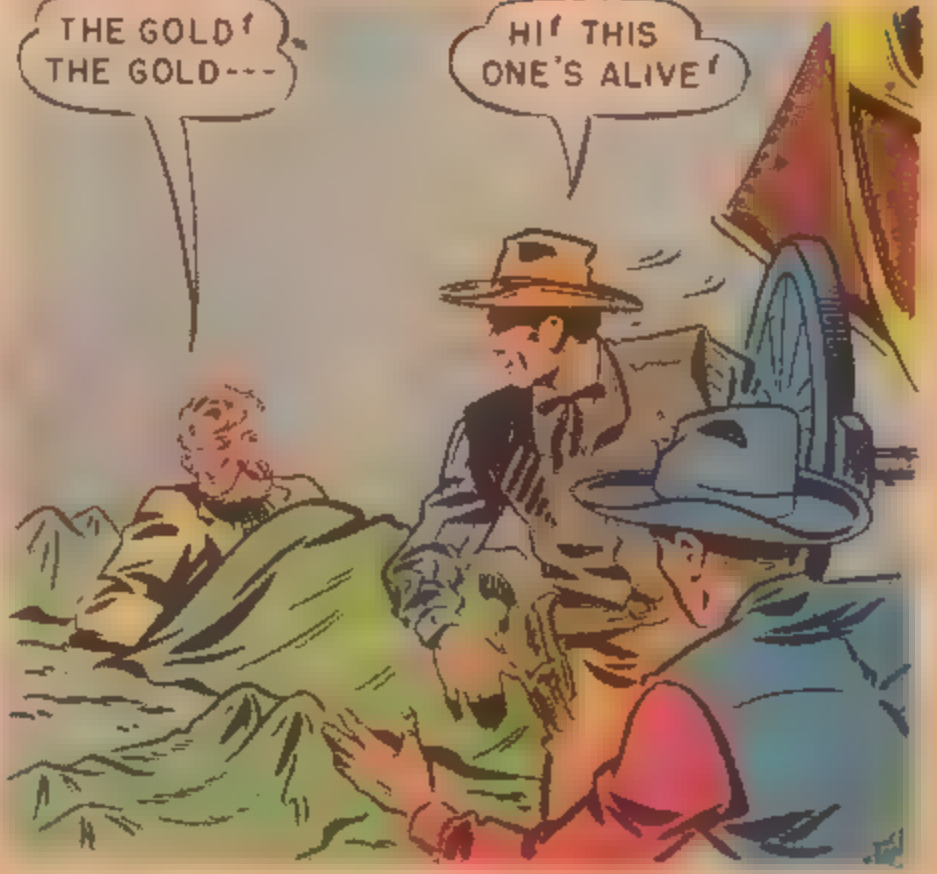
DEAD! FOUR
PASSENGERS AND HANK
MOSS --- AND THE STAGE IS
LIKE A BLASTED SIEVE!

ROAD
AGENTS!
THERE MUST
HAVE BEEN
A MOB OF
'EM!



THE GOLD!
THE GOLD---

HI! THIS
ONE'S ALIVE!



NO' NO, FRIEND'
I DON'T WANT
IT'

HE'S GONE. SHERIFF!
I HAD A HUNCH IT WOULD
BE THIS WAY!

YOU DID
WHAT YOU
COULD, WADE!

NO-- I
WOULDN'T
TOUCH IT
YOU KEEP
THE STUFF--
FOR WOMEN-
FOLKS AND
CHILDREN, WHOSE
MEN HAVE DIED,

IT'S THE ONLY
WAY THAT GOLD
WILL BE FREE --
FROM THE CURSE
THAT I'VE BROUGHT
TO IT!

I LOST MY RIDING HORSE BACK ON THE ROAD--- ANYBODY KNOW WHERE I CAN BUY ANOTHER ? I'VE GOT TO BE RIDING ON!

YOU'RE A
QUEER
DUCK, WADE-
BUT I'VE GOT
A HORSE I'LL
GIVE YOU--
AND A SADDLE
TO BOOT!

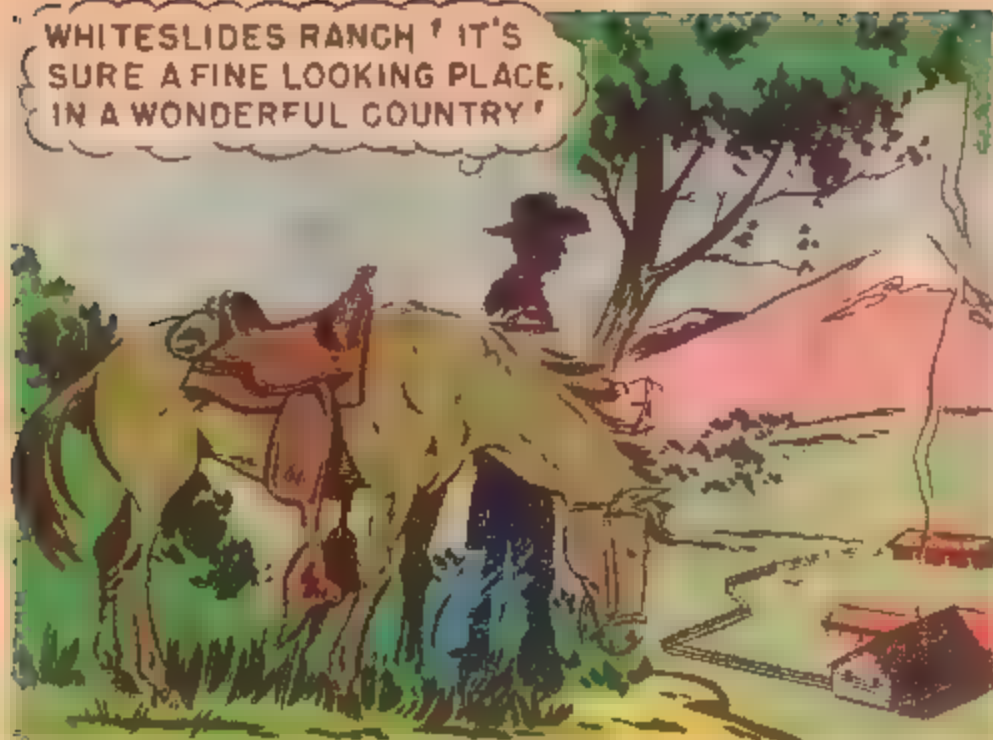
I'M OBLIGED TO
YOU, FRIEND!

FORGET IT, WADE' AND IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A JOB-- I HEAR THAT **BILL BELLOUNDS** AT MIDDLE PARK NEEDS A HUNTER' "WHITESLIDES" IS THE NAME OF THE SPREAD'

AND SO THE INVISIBLE THREAD OF DESTINY
DRAWS BENT WADE TOWARD THE END OF HIS
LONG TRAIL

KNLBOU

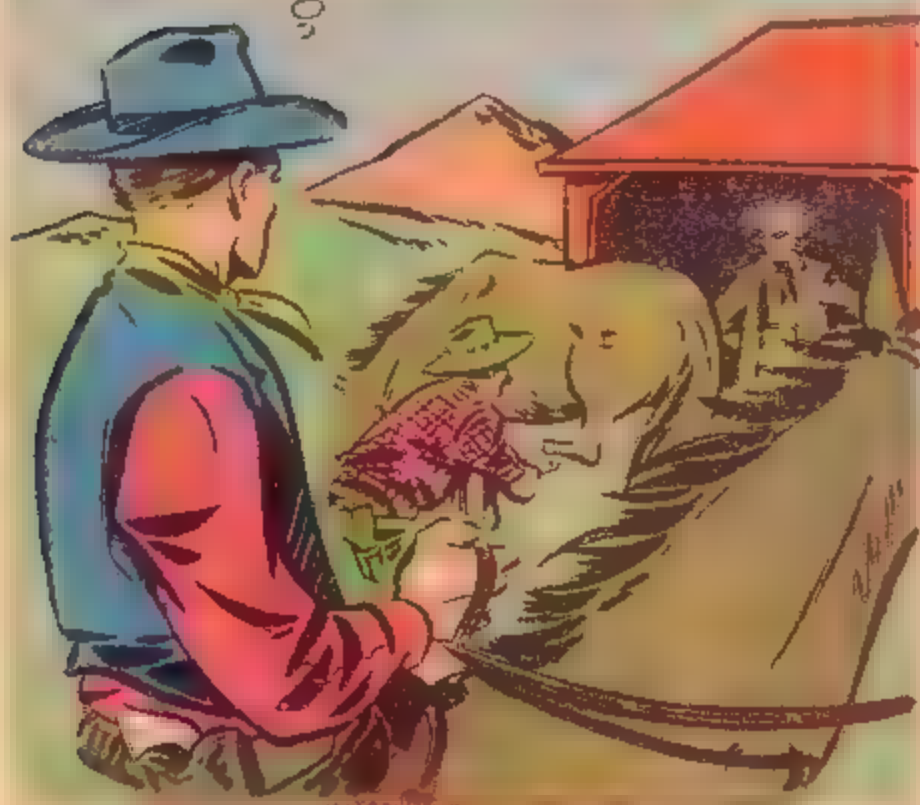
WHITESLIDES RANCH! IT'S
SURE A FINE LOOKING PLACE,
IN A WONDERFUL COUNTRY!



THEY SAY NO MAN COULD ASK FOR A
BETTER BOSS THAN BILL BELLOUNDS--
BUT HIS SON IS A SCAPEGRACE HE'S
GOT A GROWNUP DAUGHTER, TOO!



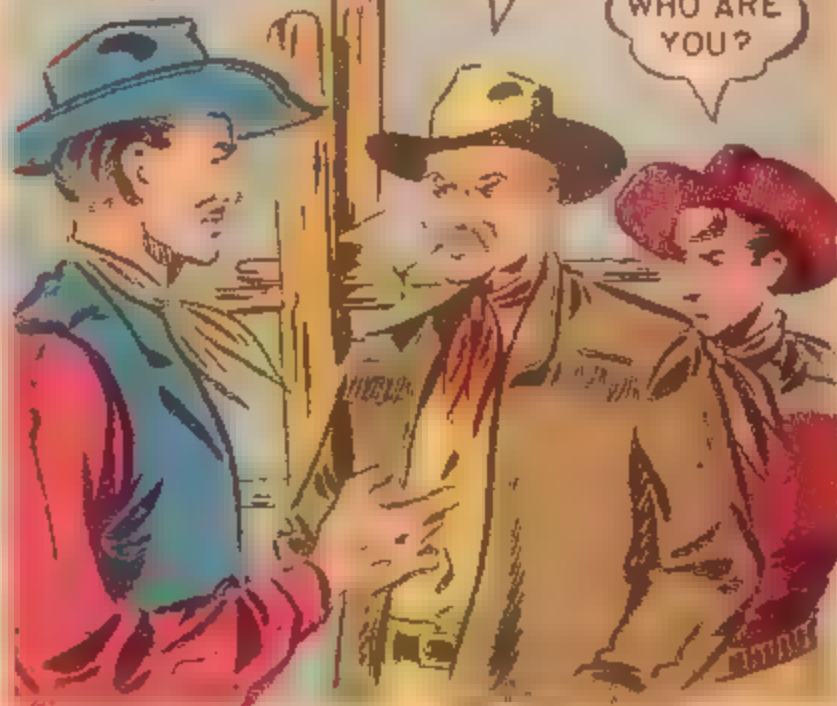
THAT MUST BE HIM -- WATCHING
THE HORSESHOEING!



BELLOUNDS? I HEAR
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR
A HUNTER!

UH-HUH! A
GOOD MAN WITH
DOGS AND GUNS --
WE'RE LOSING
CATTLE TO VARMINTS!

WHO ARE
YOU?

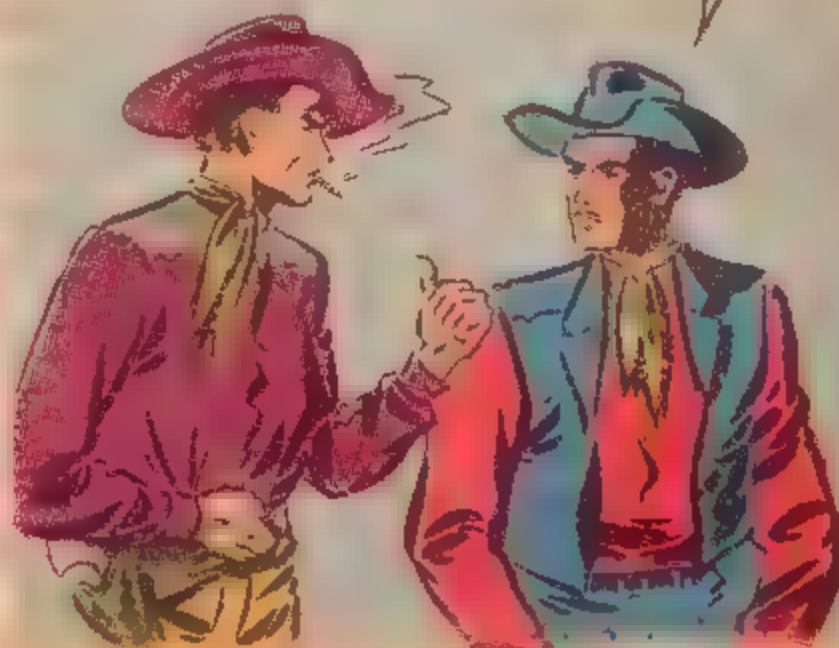
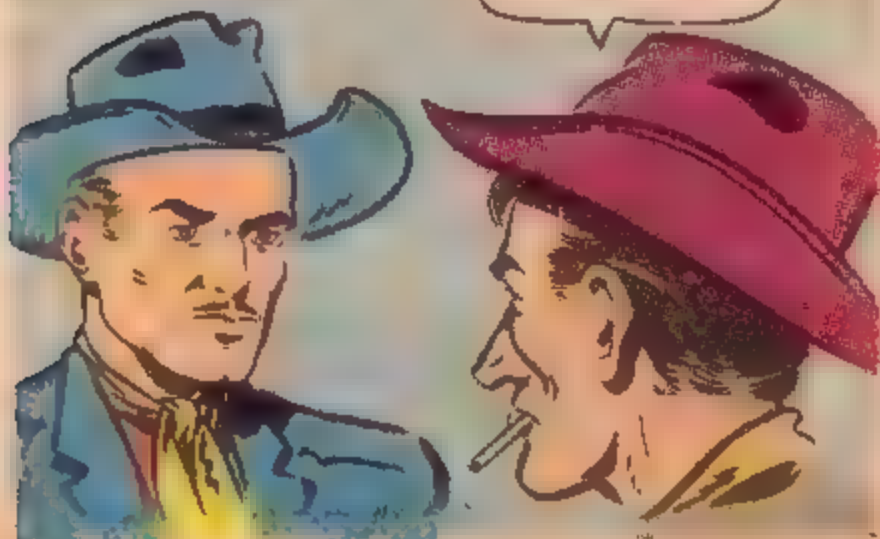


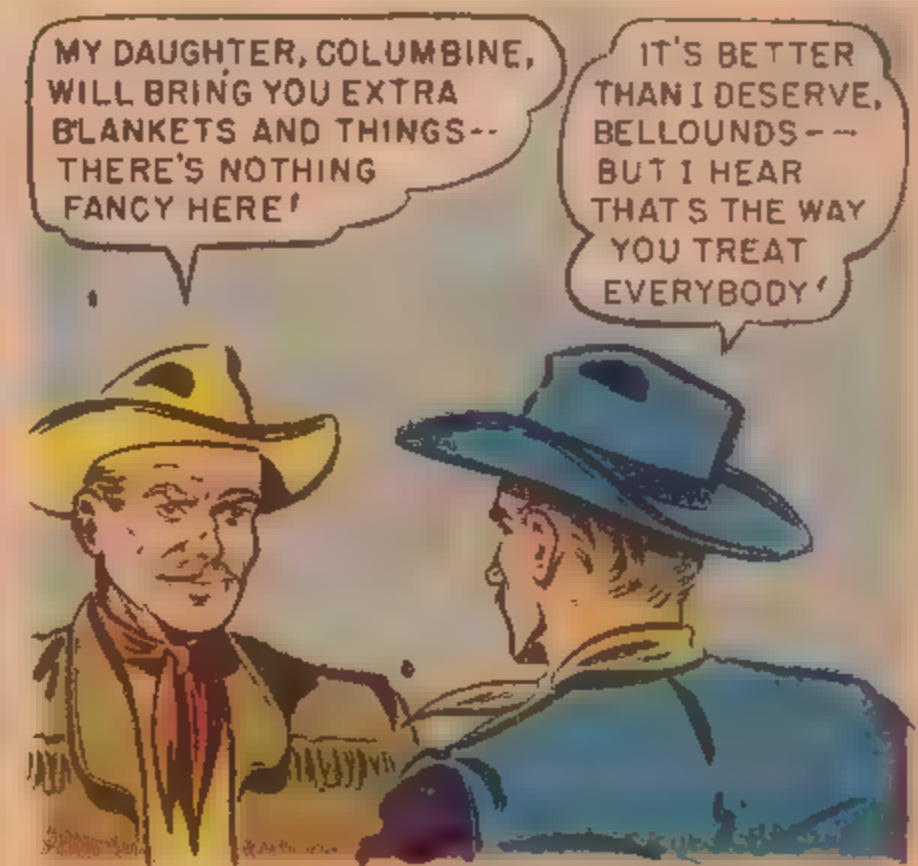
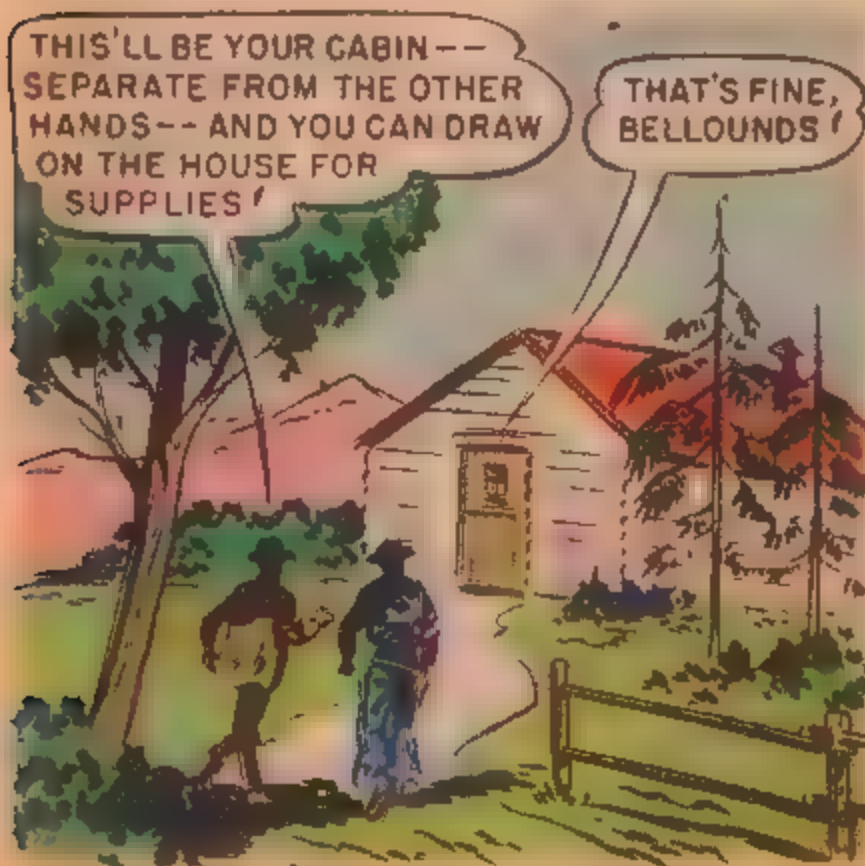
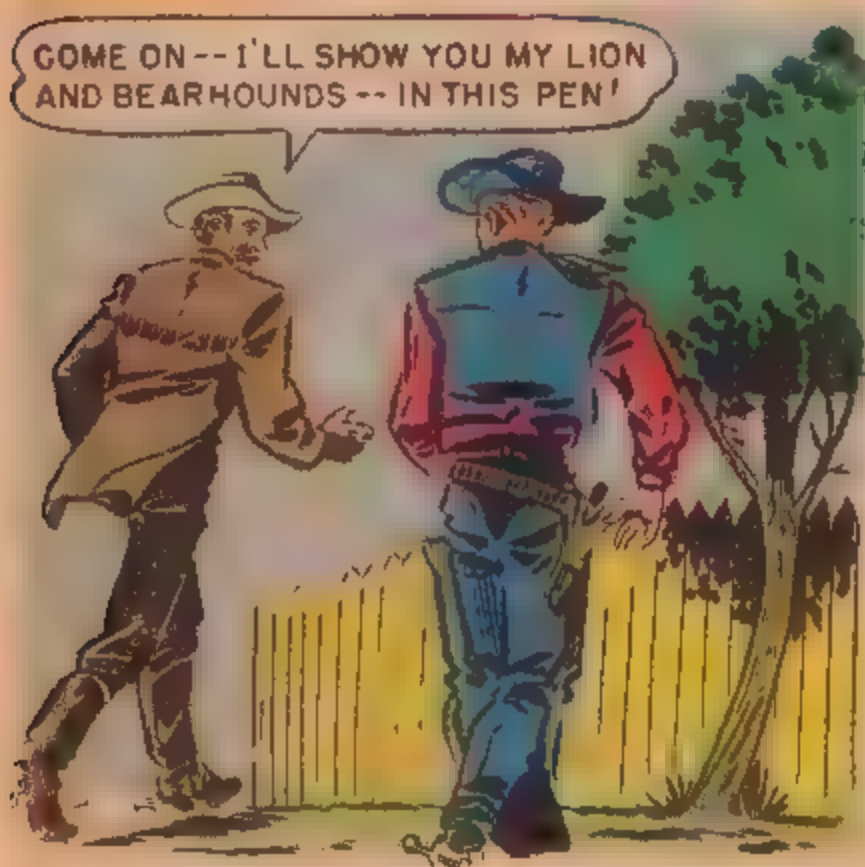
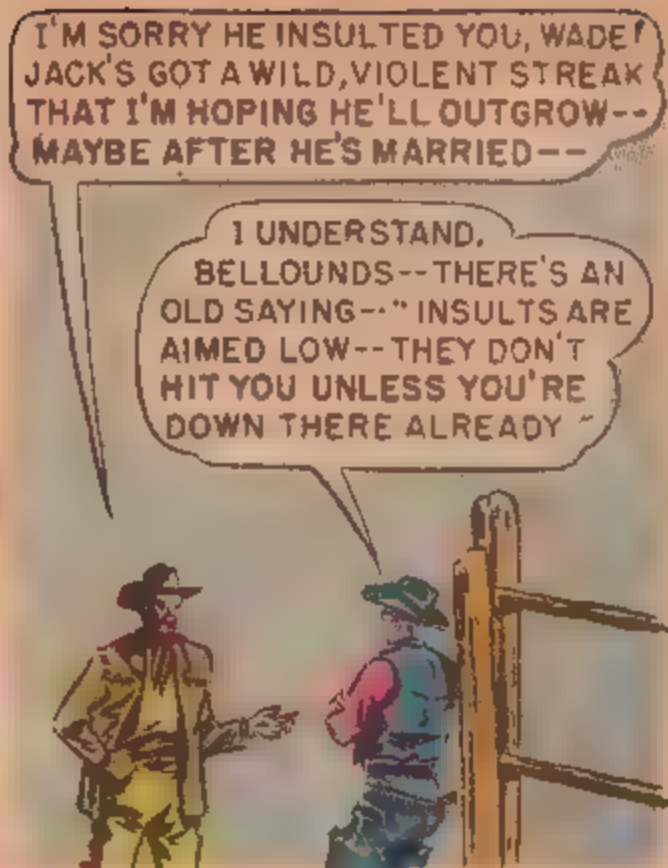
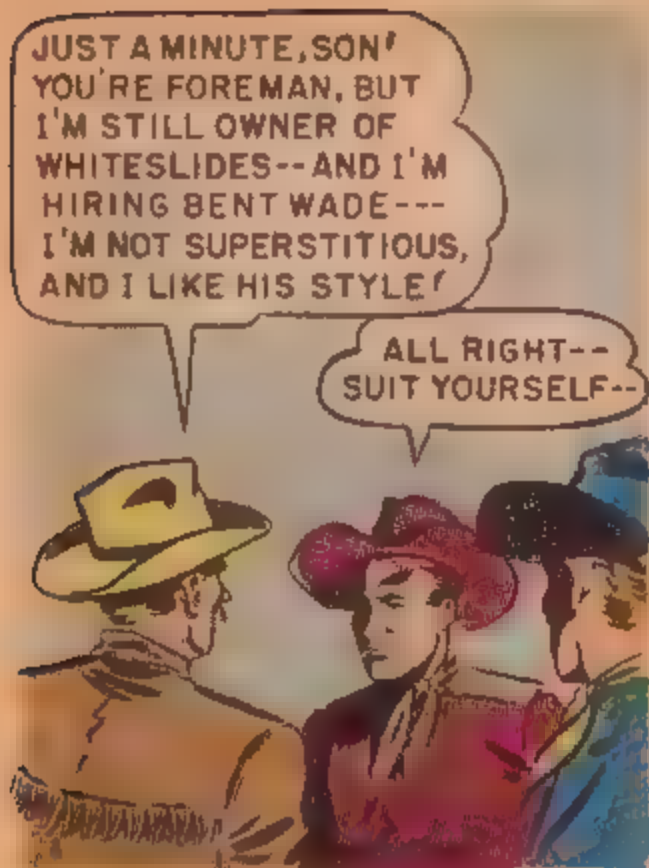
MY HANDLE IS BENT
WADE! I'VE USED DOGS
AND KILLED CATAMOUNTS--
YOU'RE JACK BELLOUNDS,
I TAKE IT?

YES! I'M
FOREMAN
OF WHITE-
SLIDES!
STRIKES ME
YOU'RE KIND OF
OLD FOR HUNTING--
AND BESIDES, I'VE
HEARD OF YOU!

YOU'VE GOT A NAME
THROUGH COLORADO OF
BRINGING HARD LUCK! WE
DON'T WANT YOUR SORT
AT THIS RANCH!

I SEE ---
DON'T
BLAME YOU,
BELLOUNDS--





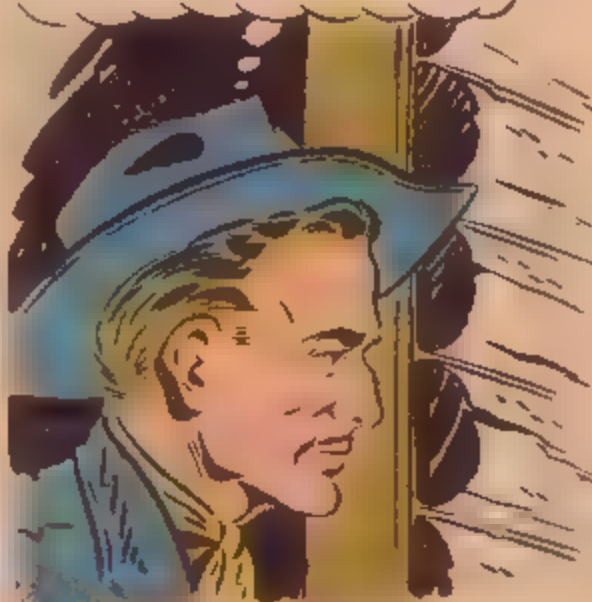
I'LL SEND COLUMBINE RIGHT OVER WITH THE THINGS YOU'LL NEED' AND REMEMBER, WADE --- YOU TAKE ORDERS FROM ME, NOT FROM MY SON-- BUT IF JACK TROMPS ON YOUR TOES, TRY TO BE PATIENT'

THANKS AGAIN, I WILL, BELLOUNDS!

I RECKON OLD BILL BELLOUNDS IS AS FINE AS THEY MAKE 'EM-- EVEN IF HIS SON IS A MEAN PUP-- I COULD STICK AT A JOB LIKE THIS-- IF IT ISN'T TOO CLOSE TO THE OLD TRAIL!

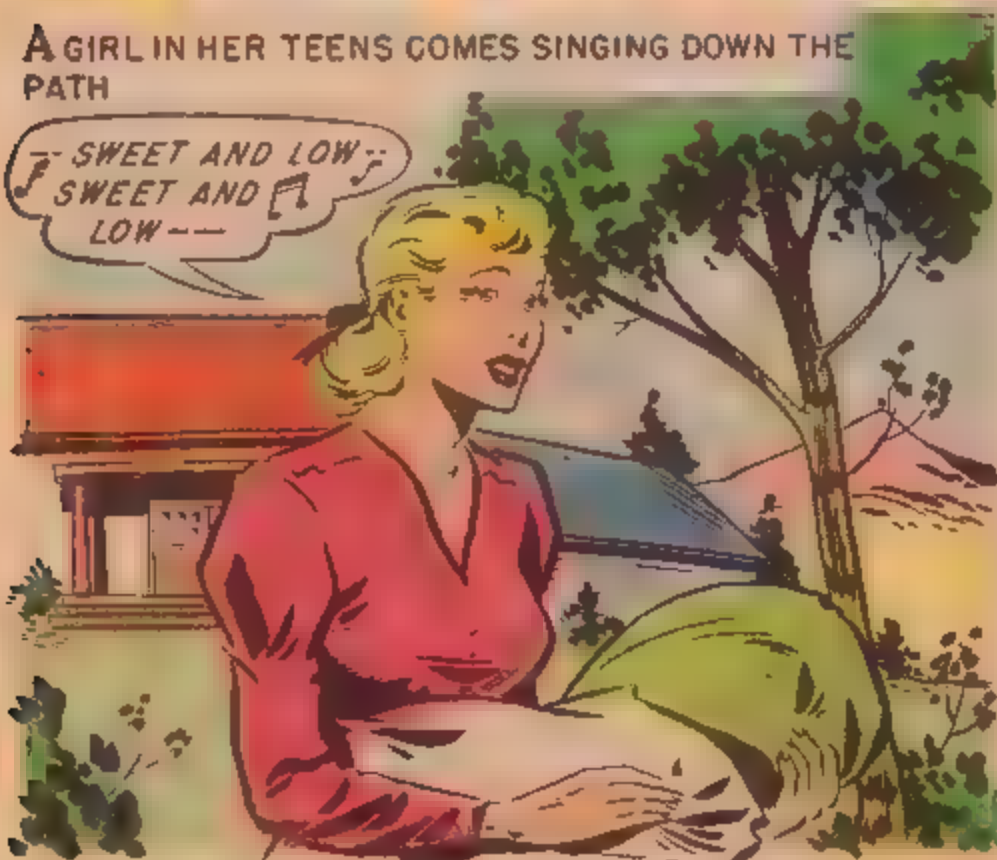
A SOUND FROM THE RANCH HOUSE ROUSES WADE FROM HIS THOUGHTS

NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE--



A GIRL IN HER TEENS COMES SINGING DOWN THE PATH

SWEET AND LOW--
SWEET AND LOW--



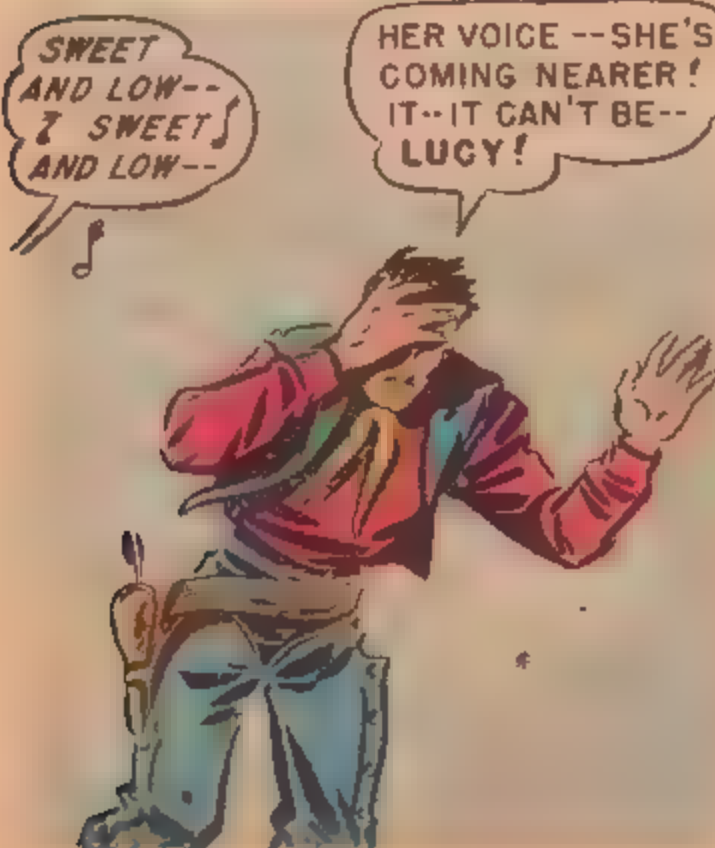
LUCY-- HER VOICE -- HER FACE' I-- I'M SEEING VISIONS'



SWEET AND LOW--
SWEET AND LOW--

HER VOICE -- SHE'S COMING NEARER! IT-- IT CAN'T BE-- LUCY!

BENT WADE' WHERE --? OH, THERE YOU ARE!

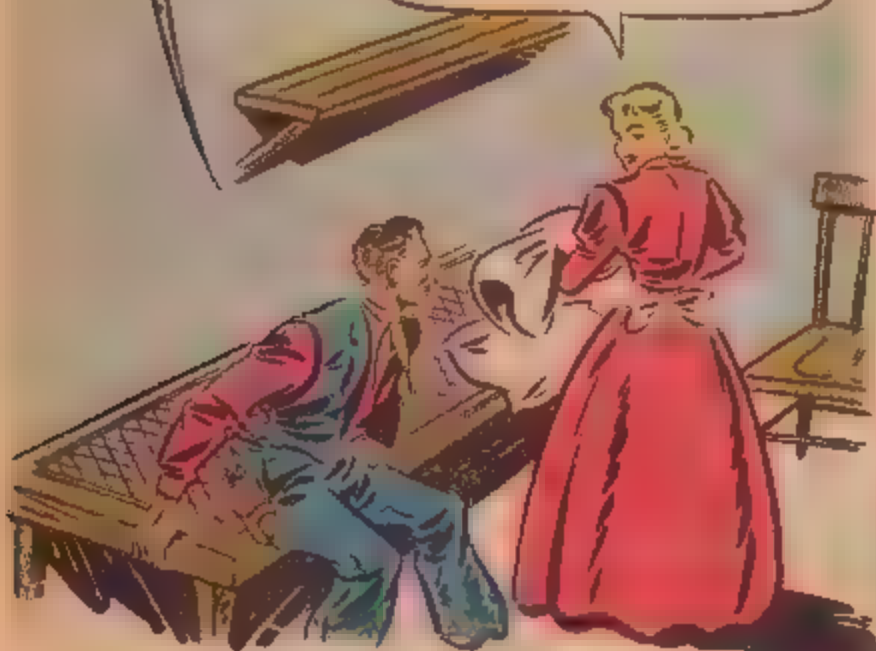


WHO-- WHO ARE YOU, MISS?

WHY-- I'M COLUMBINE --- BILL BELLOUNDS' ADOPTED DAUGHTER! I THOUGHT DAD TOLD YOU I WAS COMING OVER --

BELLOUNDS'-- ADOPTED -- DAUGHTER? COLUMBINE --?

YES, BETTER KNOWN AS "COLLIE". "MR. WADE, ARE YOU SICK?"



SICK? YES, MA'AM, I GUESS I WAS FOR A MINUTE --- BETTER NOW -- AND -- UH -- THANK YOU FOR BRINGING THOSE BLANKETS!

SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW? CAN'T I BRING YOU A HOT DRINK OR SOMETHING?

NO --- I'LL BE FINE --- AND THANK YOU KINDLY, MISS COLUMBINE!

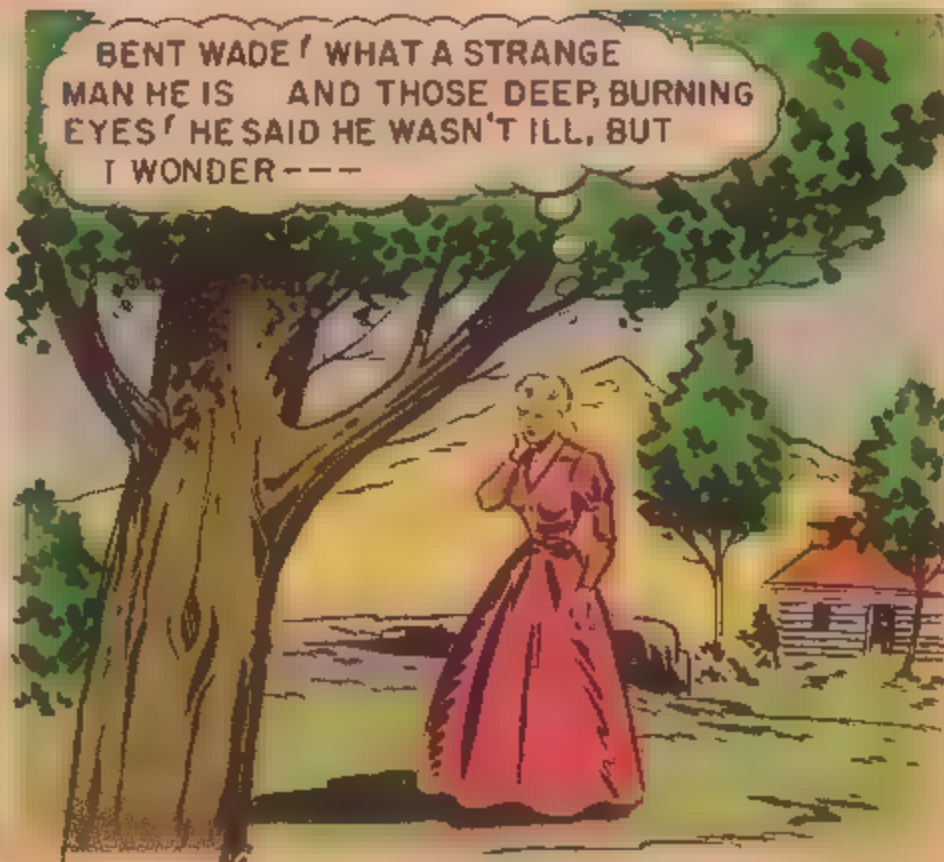
COLUMBINE! SHE'S LUCY'S DAUGHTER -- AND MINE -- SHE'S THE END OF MY LONG TRAIL!



BUT SHE'LL NEVER KNOW! I CAN HAVE NO CLAIM -- BECAUSE THE DEBT I OWE HER IS TOO GREAT, EVEN IF I HAD ANOTHER LIFE -- TIME TO PAY IT IN!



BENT WADE! WHAT A STRANGE MAN HE IS -- AND THOSE DEEP, BURNING EYES! HE SAID HE WASN'T ILL, BUT I WONDER ---



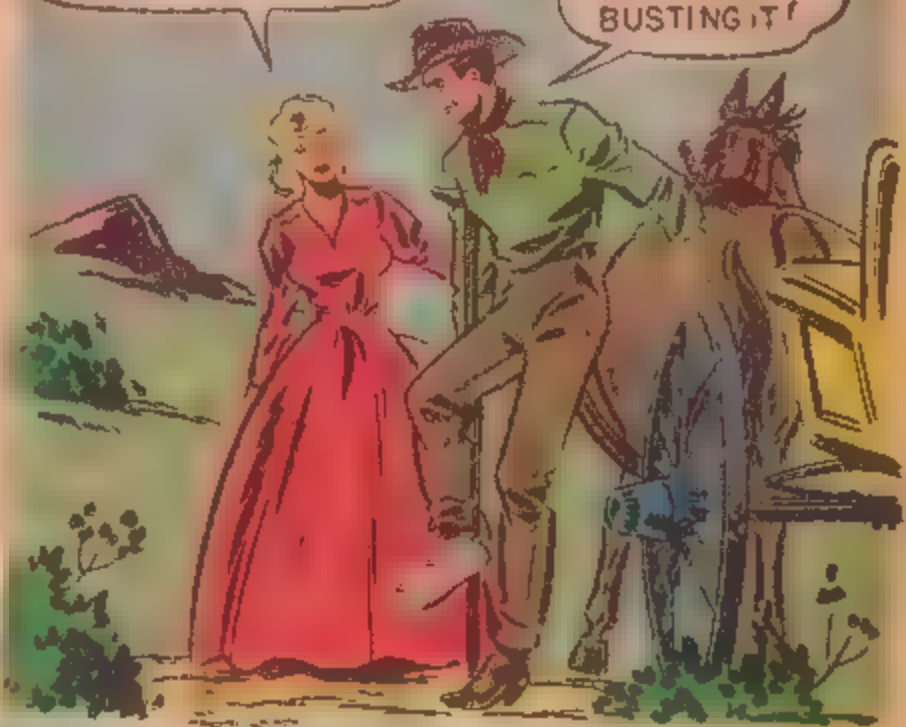
WILSON MOORE--
OF ALL PEOPLE!
WELCOME, STRANGER!



COLLIE! IT'S GOOD
TO SEE YOU!

OH! YOUR FOOT--- IT
ISN'T HEALED AFTER
ALL THIS TIME?

NOPE! THAT
HORSE DID A
REAL JOB OF
BUSTING IT!



WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN
KEEPING YOURSELF, COWBOY--
FORGET WHERE YOUR
FRIENDS LIVED?

I'VE JUST COME
BACK--- TO HOMESTEAD
AT RED BLUFF--- COLLIE,
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU'RE
GOING TO MARRY BUSTER
JACK BELLOUNDS?

YES, WILS. IT'S TRUE! DAD
BELIEVES IT WILL CHANGE JACK
FROM A WILD, RECKLESS BOY INTO
A GOOD MAN--- AND I THINK SO, TOO!



CHANGE THE DEVIL INTO
A SAINT! GOOD GRIEF--
ARE YOU MOONSTRUCK,
COLLIE? JACK BELLOUNDS
IS A ROTTEN APPLE, FROM
SKIN TO CORE!

I HAVE THE RIGHT OF
A MAN WHO HAS LOVED
YOU ALL HIS LIFE! THE
RIGHT TO WARN YOU,
COLLIE---

I NEVER TOLD YOU IN
WORDS, COLLIE--- BUT
IN EVERY OTHER WAY
I TRIED--- I THOUGHT
YOU KNEW--- AND CARED!

WILS!--
WILS! YOU
SHAN'T SAY
THAT TO ME!
YOU HAVE
NO RIGHT--

OH!
YOU NEVER
TALKED LIKE
THAT BEFORE!
YOU NEVER
TOLD ME---

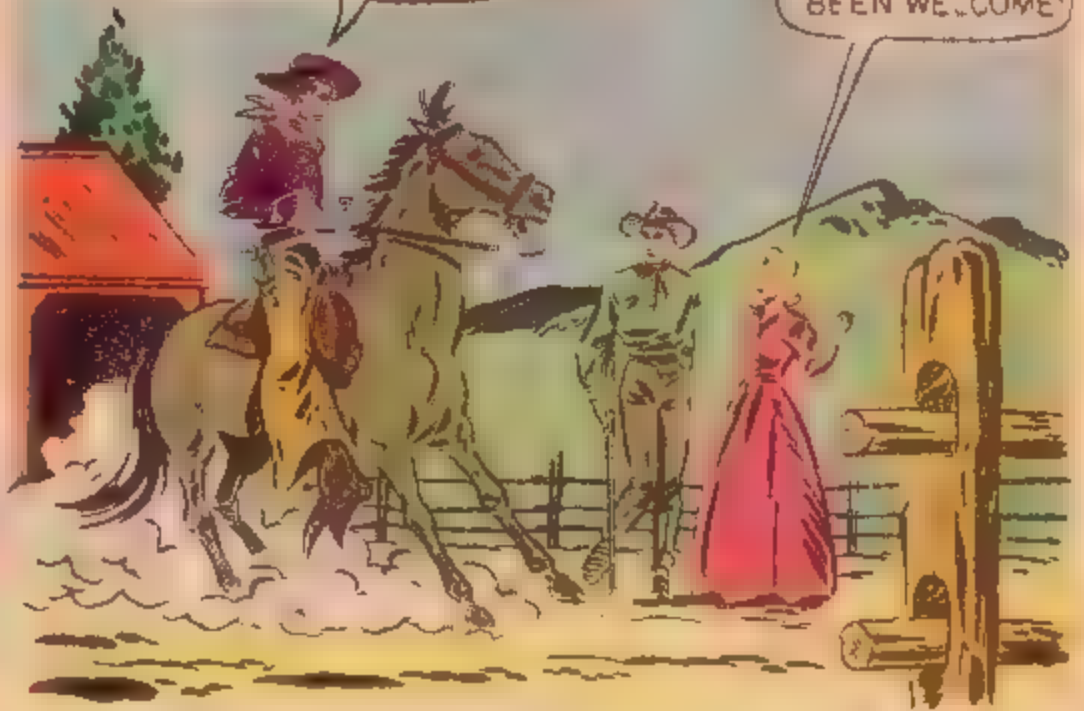
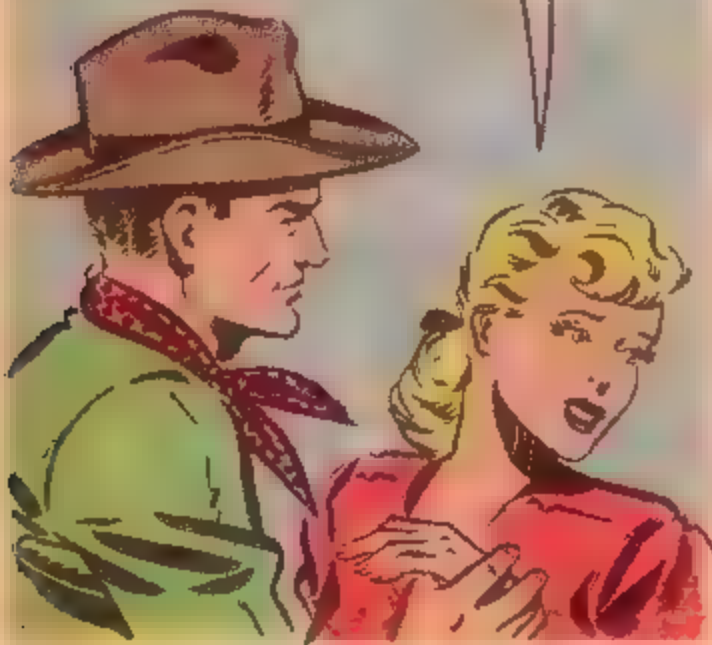


COLLIE, TELL ME!
DOES IT MAKE ANY
DIFFERENCE NOW?

I---I-- OH,
WILSON,
HERE COMES
JACK!

UP TO YOUR OLD TRICKS, AREN'T
YOU, MOORE? HORNING IN WHERE
YOU'RE NOT WANTED ---

JACK! THAT'S
NOT SO! WILSON
HAS ALWAYS
BEEN WELCOME!



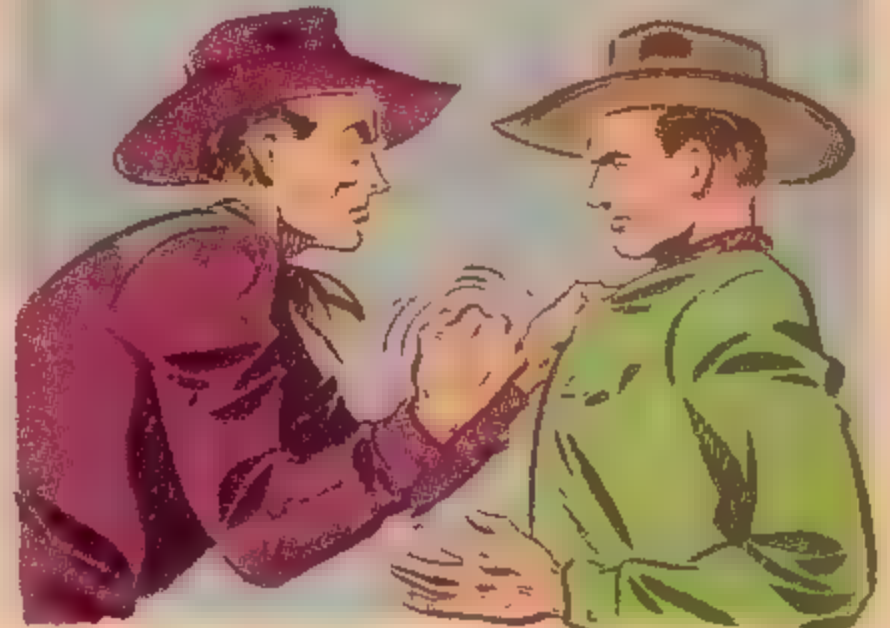
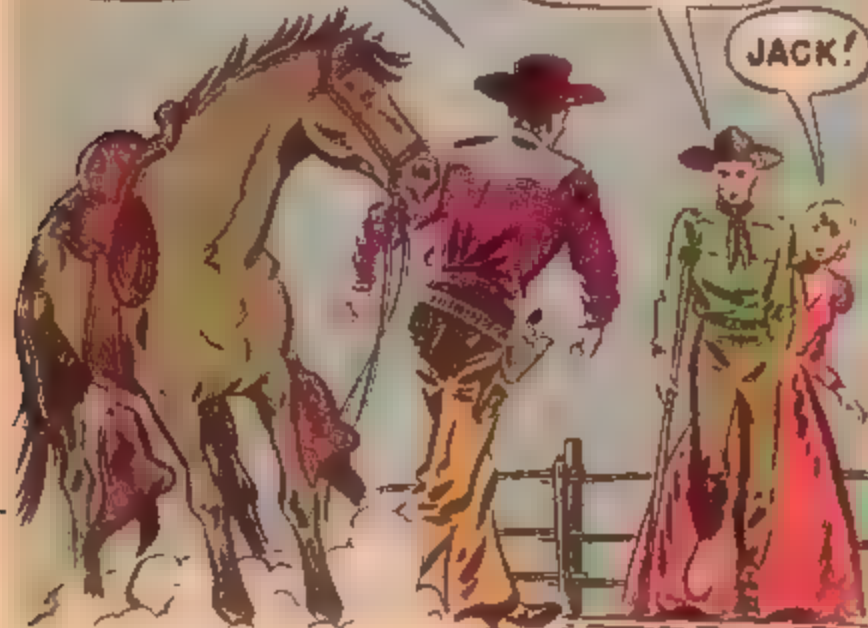
CLEAR OUT, MOORE!
COLLIE IS MARRYING
ME--- AND YOUR
WELCOME'S AT
AN END!

ARE YOU
SPEAKING FOR
YOUR DAD--- OR
JUST YOURSELF,
BELLOUNDS?

HOP BACK IN THAT
RIG, YOU BLASTED
CLUBFOOT, OR I'LL--

DON'T TRY IT,
BELLOUNDS!

JACK!

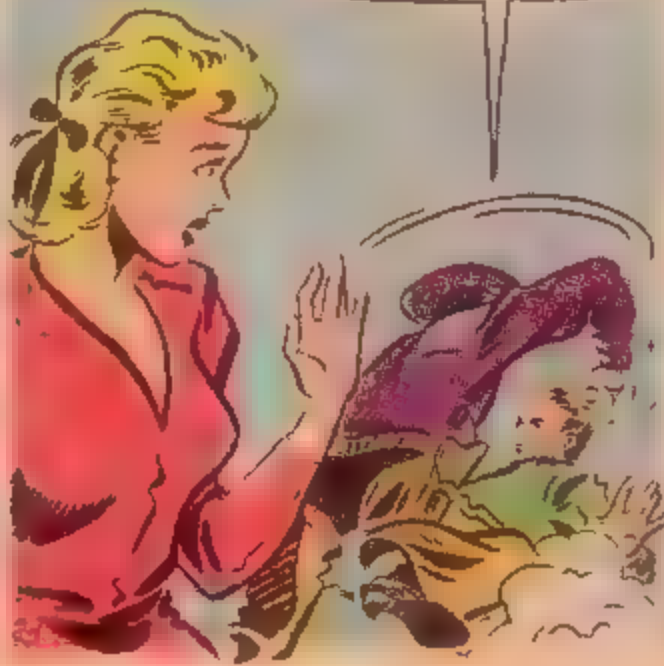


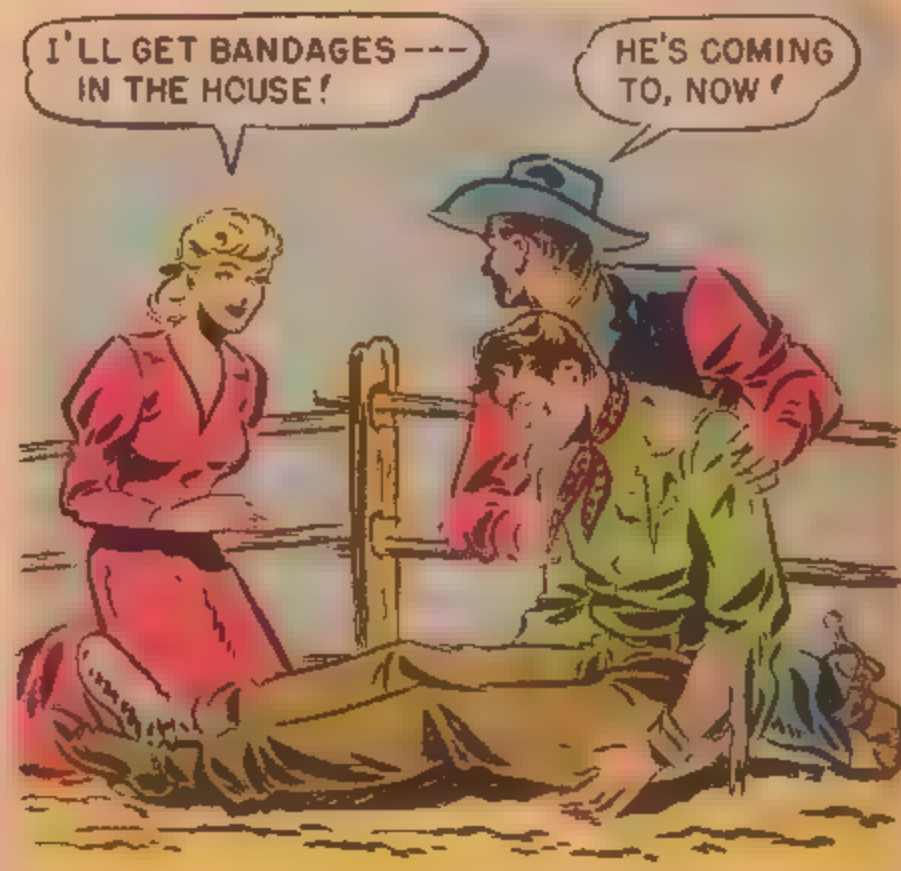
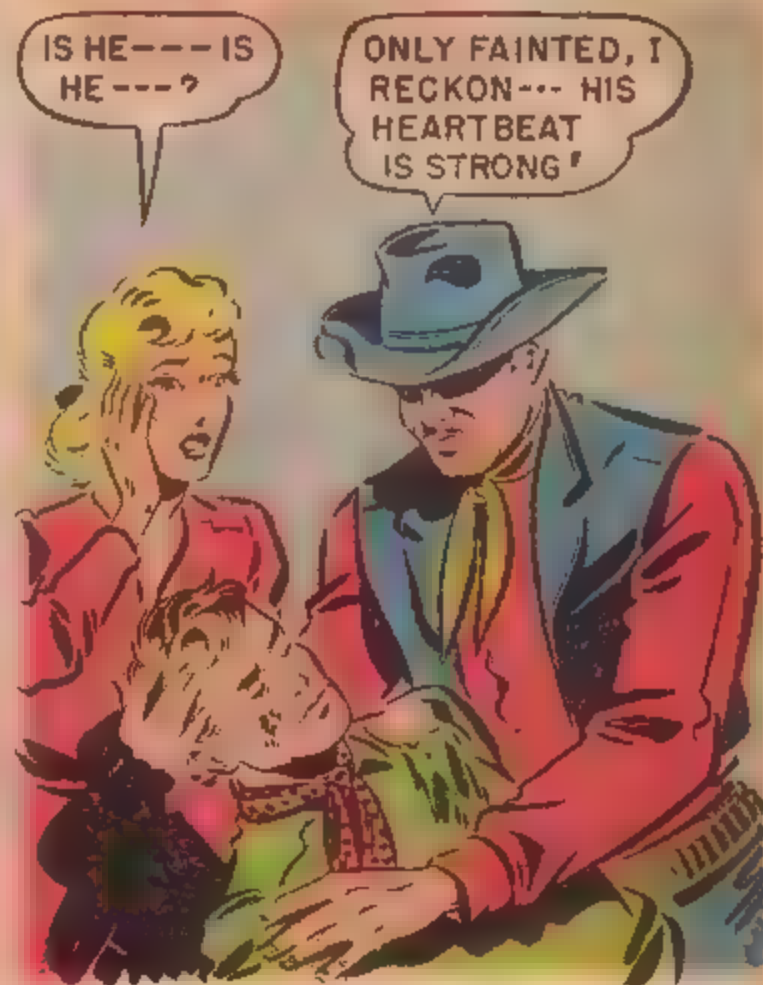
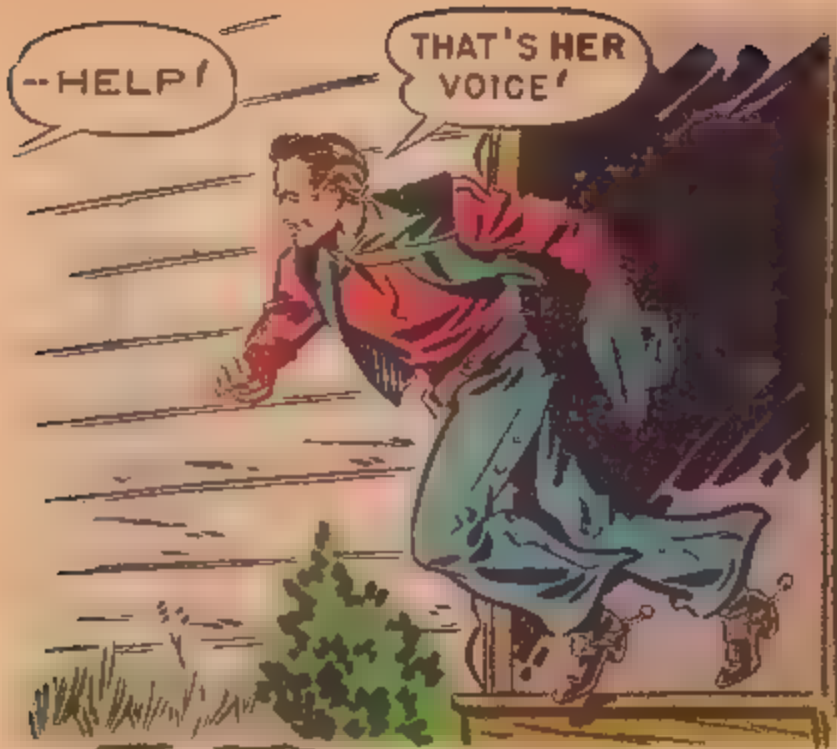
--- KILL
YUH!

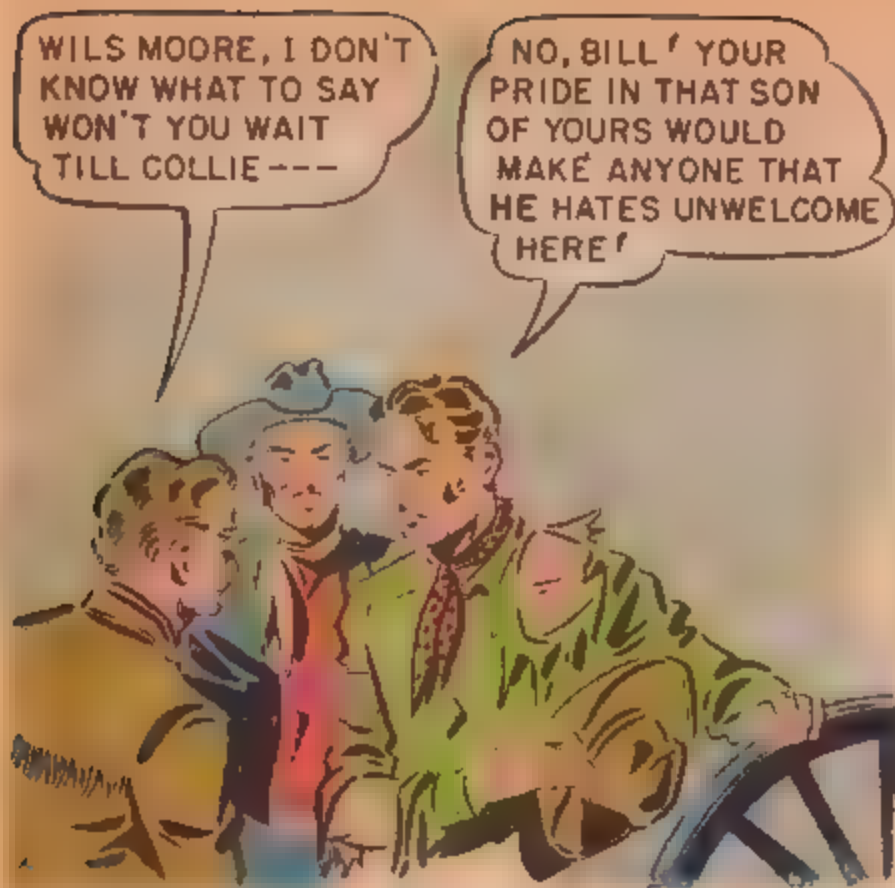
DAD! DAD!
HELP! COME
QUICK!

I'VE GOT YOU
WHERE--- I'VE---
ALWAYS--- WANTED
YOU--- MOORE---

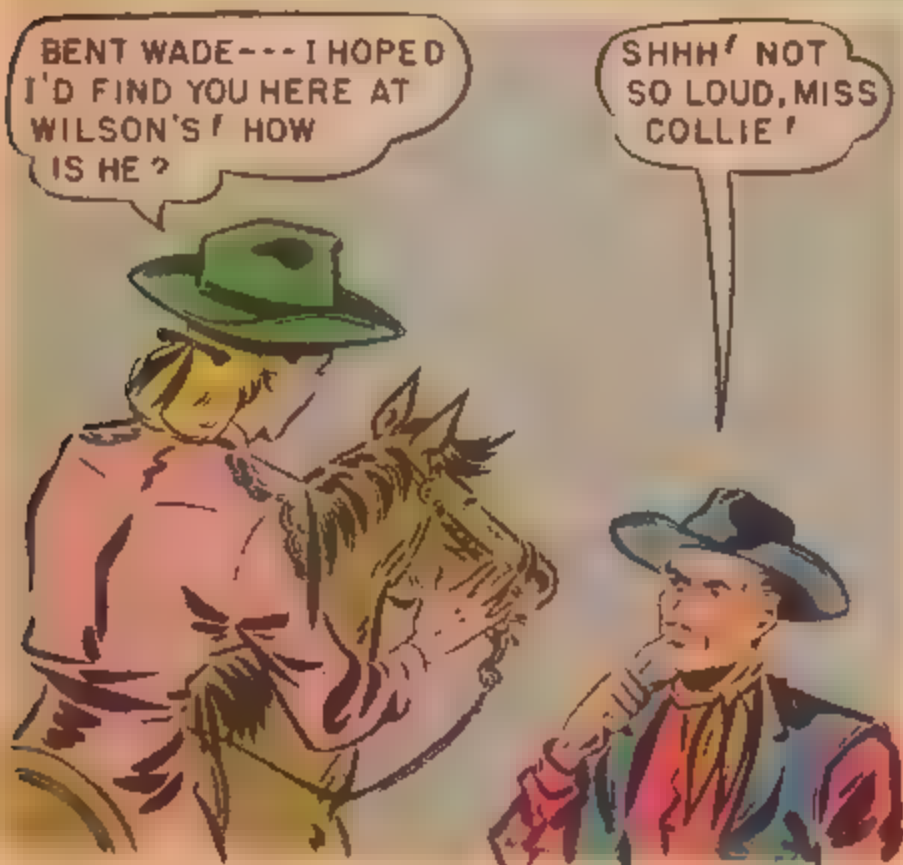
--- WHERE IT'LL
HURT YOU
MOST!

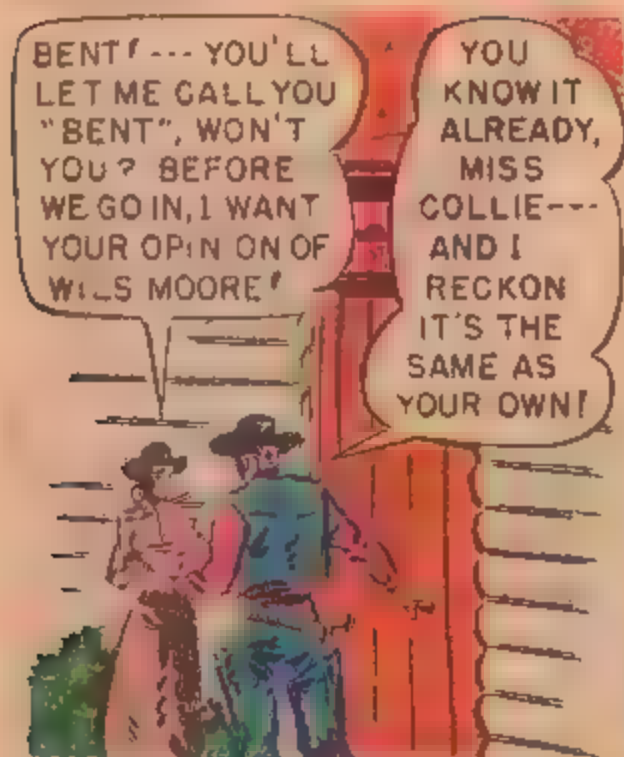
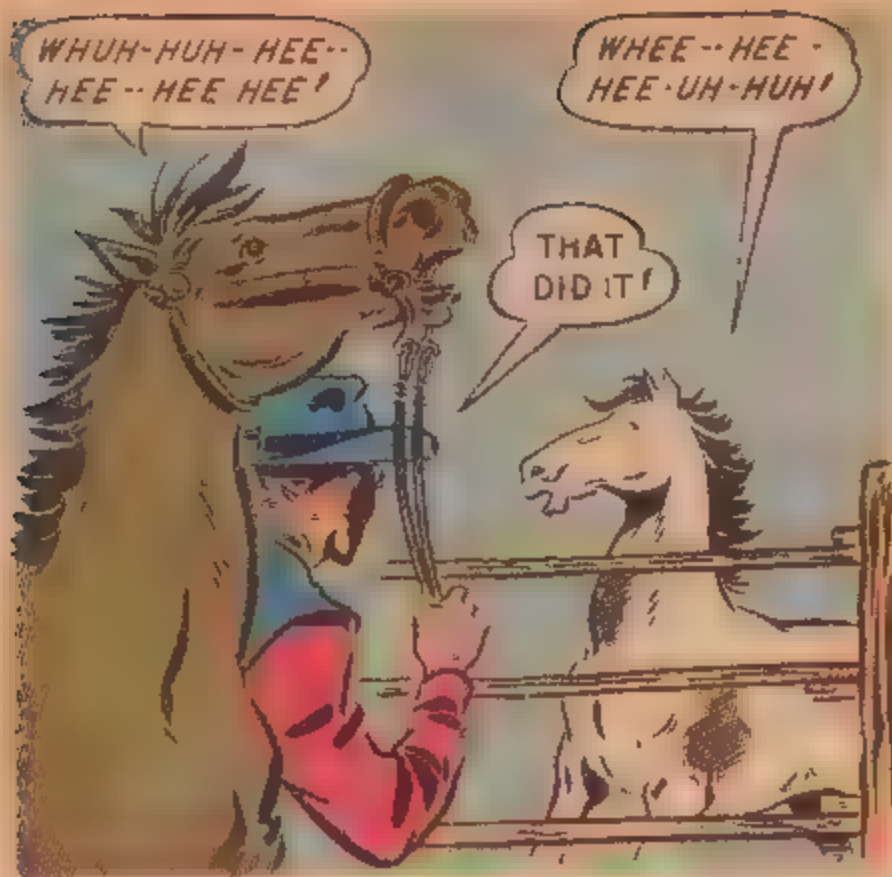






EARLY THE NEXT MORNING ...





I MEAN IT! AND I HAD TO TELL YOU, WILS-- BUT I'M GOING TO MARRY JACK BELLOUNDS, ALL THE SAME! IF I DIDN'T, IT WOULD BREAK DAD'S HEART--- AND I OWE DAD ALL THAT I HAVE AND AM!

BUT--- I DON'T UNDERSTAND! YOU LOVE ME, YOU SAID---

THAT'S JUST AS TERRIBLY TRUE, MY DEAR!

GOOD-BYE, WILS! I MAY--SEE YOU AGAIN--- BUT NOT AFTER OCTOBER FIRST--- I'M MARRYING JACK THEN!



BENT! YOU HEARD--- WHAT I JUST TOLD WILS?

YES, COLLIE--- BUT I RECKON WHAT YOU TOLD HIM WILL NEVER COME TO PASS!

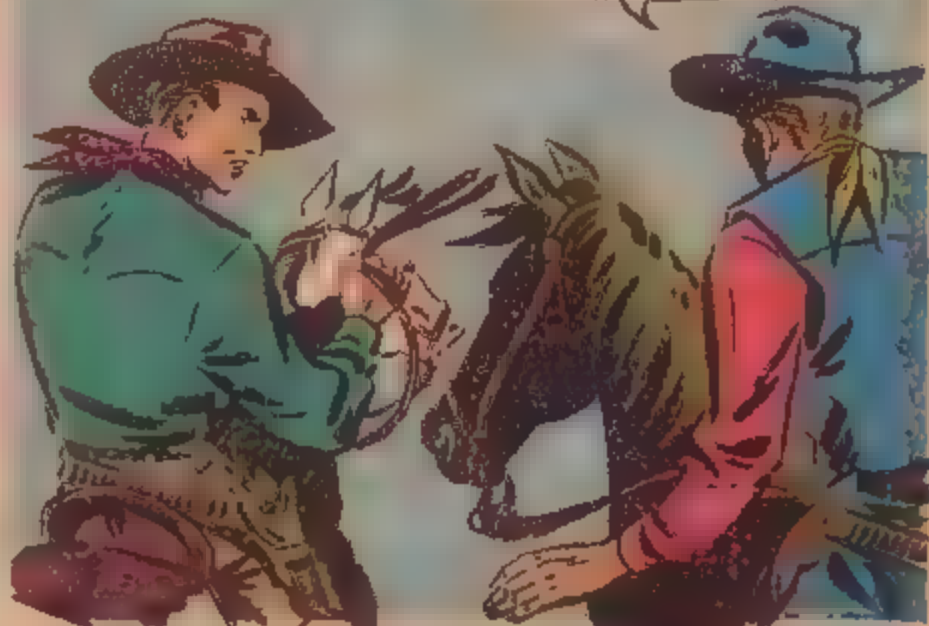
CALL IT A HUNCH OR A PREMONITION-- WHEN I GET A FEELING LIKE THIS, IT NEVER FAILS! SOMETHING IS GOING TO PREVENT YOUR MARRYING JACK BELLOUNDS!



SWIFTLY TOO SWIFTLY FOR WILSON MOORE THE WEEKS OF SUMMER PASS MOODY AND RESTLESS, HE RIDES MUCH ALONE, DESPITE HIS ACHING FOOT

WADE! WHY---HOW DID YOU FIND ME HERE?

THE "HOW" IS EASY-- YOUR SPOTTIE HAS A QUEER-SHAPED LEFT FRONT HOOF THAT MARKS HIS TRAIL



... AND AS FOR THE "WHY" OF MY TRAILING YOU--- I'VE BEEN WANTING TO ASK IF YOU EVER HEARD HOW COLUMBINE CAME TO BE ADOPTED BY BELLOUNDS ?

I'VE KNOWN THAT SINCE WE WERE KIDS I THOUGHT YOU'D HEARD TOO, BENT'

SOME GOLD MINERS FOUND HER IN A PATCH OF COLUMBINES, NEAR WHAT WAS LEFT OF AN EMIGRANT TRAIN' THE INDIANS HAD KILLED HER PEOPLE --- THE MINERS BROUGHT HER TO BELLOUNDS--- THE ONLY FAMILY MAN IN FIFTY MILES'



NOW I UNDERSTAND-- WHY THEY CALL HER COLUMBINE-- AND WHY SHE FEELS THAT SHE OWES MORE TO BELLOUNDS THAN IF SHE WERE HIS OWN'

SHE'LL NEVER PAY HIM THE WAY HE WANTS --- THROWING AWAY HER LIFE! I'LL SEE TO THAT --

NOT WITH GUNPLAY, SON! SOMEHOW I'M SURE JACK BELLOUNDS WILL PASS OUT OF THE PICTURE -- BUT IT WON'T BE ON YOUR SOUL!



A FEW DAYS LATER .

THAT'S JACK BELLOUNDS -- AND HE'S RIDING WILSON'S SPOTTIE, OR A HORSE THAT'S MARKED THE SAME!

HE'S GOT OFF, AND IS PULLING THE PONY'S FRONT SHOE' NOW, I WONDER ---

QUICKLY, BELLOUNDS SLIPS THE HORSESHOE OUT OF SIGHT



... AND NAILS ON ANOTHER .



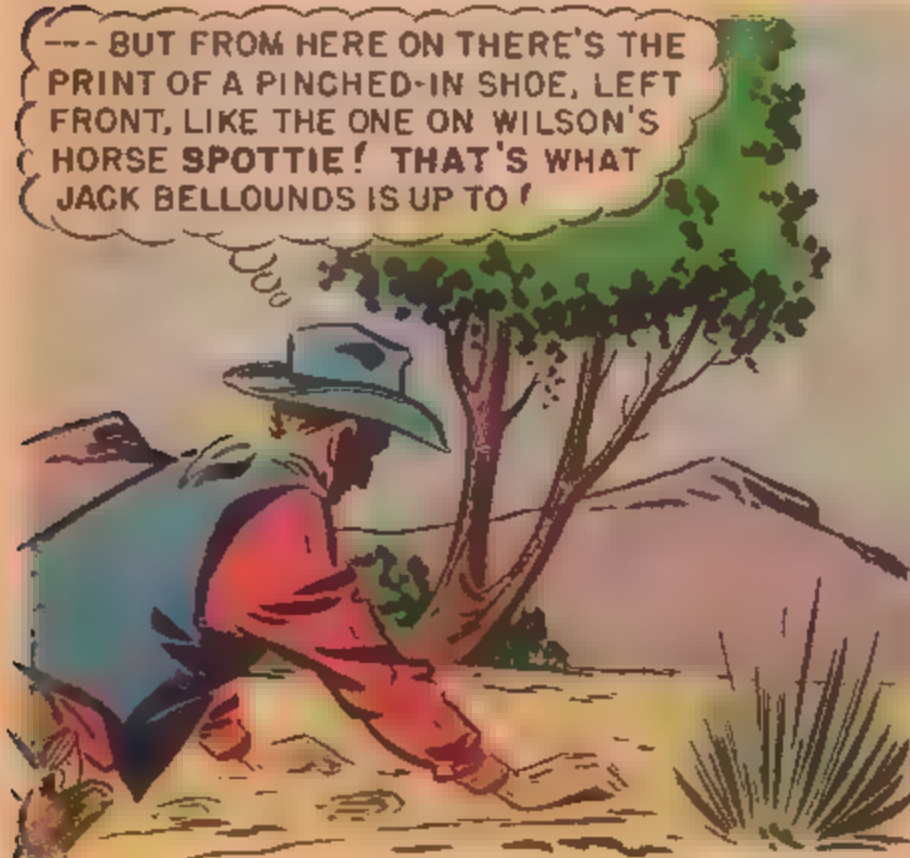
HE'S RIDING ON---
NOW I'LL LEARN WHAT
IT'S ALL ABOUT!



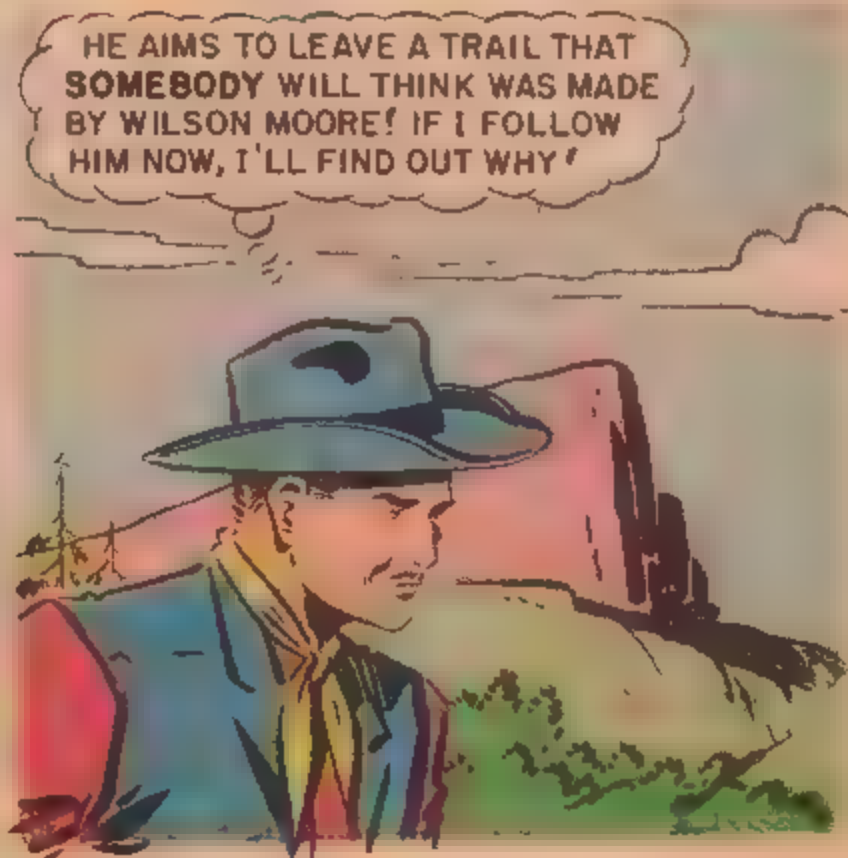
JUST PLAIN ORDINARY
HORSE TRACKS, WHERE
I CAN SEE 'EM---



--- BUT FROM HERE ON THERE'S THE
PRINT OF A PINCHED-IN SHOE, LEFT
FRONT, LIKE THE ONE ON WILSON'S
HORSE **SPOTTIE**! THAT'S WHAT
JACK BELLOUNDS IS UP TO!



HE AIMS TO LEAVE A TRAIL THAT
SOMEBODY WILL THINK WAS MADE
BY WILSON MOORE! IF I FOLLOW
HIM NOW, I'LL FIND OUT WHY!



THE TRAIL LEADS TO A FAR CORNER OF
BILL BELLOUNDS' RANGE .



AND A SMALL BUNCH OF GRASS-FAT STEERS...

HI-YAH! GIT
ALONG, YOU!



THOSE ARE HIS DAD'S OWN
STEERS--- AND HE'S DRIVING
THEM OFF' AND PINNING THE
BLAME ON WILS MOORE'



HE'S HEADED FOR THE OLD RUSTLER
TRAIL UNDER GORE PEAK--- I CAN
CROSS THE VALLEY AHEAD OF HIM'



RIGHT ON TIME,
BELLOUNDS'
WE'LL TAKE 'EM
FROM HERE'



THESE STEERS ARE IN
PRIME SHAPE' HAVE
YOU GOT MONEY FOR
THEM WITH YOU,
SM TH?

ASK CAP---
HE HANDLES
THAT END
OF IT'

WE PAY AFTER WE'VE GOT RID OF
THE CRITTERS' IF YOU'RE BACK AT
THIS OLD PROSPECTOR'S CABIN AT
NOON A WEEK FROM TODAY, YOU
CAN COLLECT WHAT'S COMING TO
YOU, BELLOUNDS' WE'LL BRING
A JUG AND A PACK O' CARDS
ALONG, TOO'



IT'S CAP FOLSOM---
(AFTER TWENTY YEARS!)
(I KNEW OUR TRAILS
WOULD CROSS!)



SO THEY'LL ALL BE BACK
HERE WEDNESDAY, AT
NOON! THAT'LL BE
THE TIME WHEN I LL--



JACK WENT INSIDE--
AND NOW HE'S OUTSIDE,
POKING AT THE
GROUND!



THIS--- OUGHT TO ---
DO THE TRICK!



I RECKON THAT SETUP IS
FOOLPROOF--- IT'LL BRING
ME EXTRA CASH, AND IT'LL
HURT MOORE WORSE THAN
KILLING HIM! HAW, HAW!



ROUND MARKS-- LIKE THE END OF
WILSON'S CRUTCH! UN-HUH! IT
WOULD BE FOOLPROOF EVIDENCE
--- EXCEPT THAT I'VE SEEN
IT MADE!



I COULD UPSET JACK
BELLOUNDS APPLE CART NOW---
BUT I'LL WAIT--- WAIT AND
STICK MIGHTY CLOSE TO
WILS MOORE!



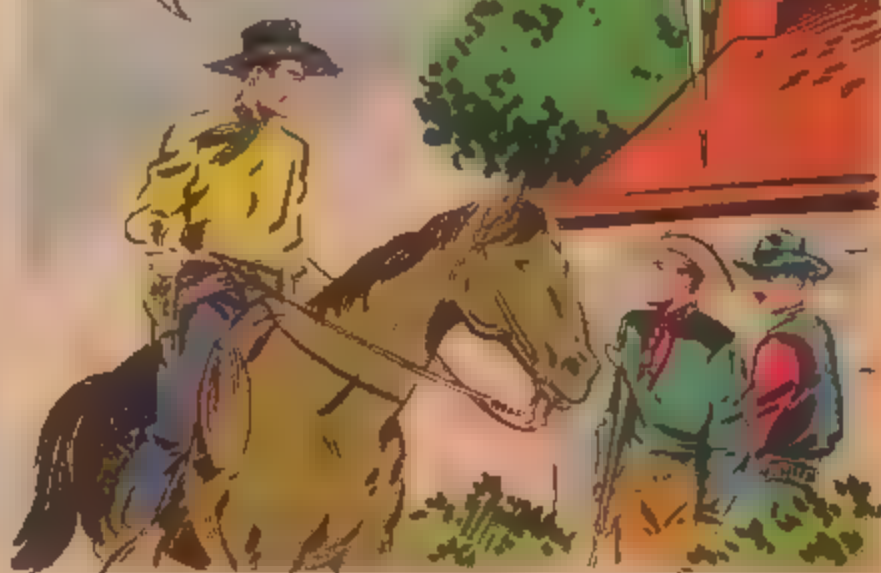
AFTER THREE DAYS...

WILS, THERE'S A RIDER COMING--- LOOKS LIKE ONE OF BILL BELLOUNDS' COWBOYS!

WHAT WOULD HE WANT HERE?

OLD BILL WOULD LIKE YOU TO COME DOWN TO THE HOUSE RIGHT NOW, WILS--- I RECKON IT'S IMPORTANT!

TELL HIM I'LL START IN A FEW MINUTES, LEM!



DO YOU THINK THIS IS SOMETHING TO DO WITH-- WITH COLLIE, BENT?

WE'LL KNOW WHEN WE GET THERE, WILS!

WHATEVER HAPPENS FROM NOW ON, SON, DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD--- AND IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A TIGHT SPOT, LET ME HANDLE THINGS!

ALL RIGHT! I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT I TRUST YOU MORE THAN ANY OTHER MAN, BENT!



HERE'S MOORE, SHERIFF!

AND I KNOW THE RIDER WITH HIM-- THE WHITEST MAN THAT EVER WORE BOOTS!

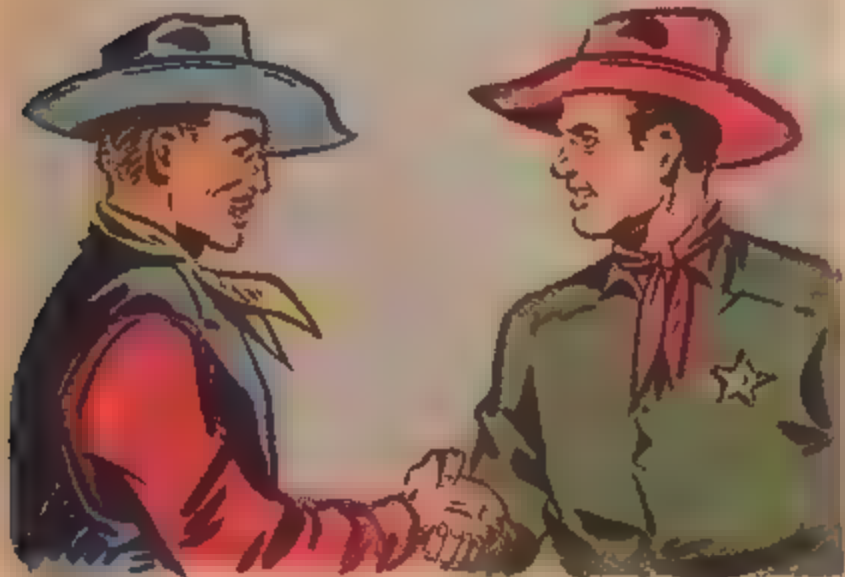


JIM BURLEY! I HAVEN'T
SEEN YOU IN TEN YEARS--
AND THIS IS SURE A
TREAT!

SAME HERE,
BENT WADE!
I'VE HEARD OF
YOU FROM TIME
TO TIME!

WILS MOORE, HOW
D'YE DO? I'M SORRY
TO HEAR THAT FOOT
HAS GIVEN YOU SO
MUCH TROUBLE!

IT'S COMING
ALONG, THANKS---
WHAT'S THE NEWS?



THE NEWS IS BAD, WILS---
JACK BELLOUNDS ACCUSES
YOU OF RUSTLING HIS
DAD'S STOCK!

AND I'VE GOT THE PROOFS ---
RIGHT HERE! SHOW HIM,
SHERIFF BURLEY!

PROOFS? WHAT IN
THUNDER DO YOU
MEAN?



ARE THESE CLAY
PRINTS LIKE ANY-
THING YOU EVER
SAW, WILS?

SURE!
THEY
LOOK LIKE
THE TRACK'S
OF MY HORSE'S
LEFT FRONT SHOE--
AND THE END OF
MY CRUTCH! WHERE
DID YOU GET 'EM?

WE FOUND THEM
MIXED IN WITH
THE TRACKS OF
BELLOUNDS'
RUSTLED STEERS,
OVER BY GORE
PEAK!

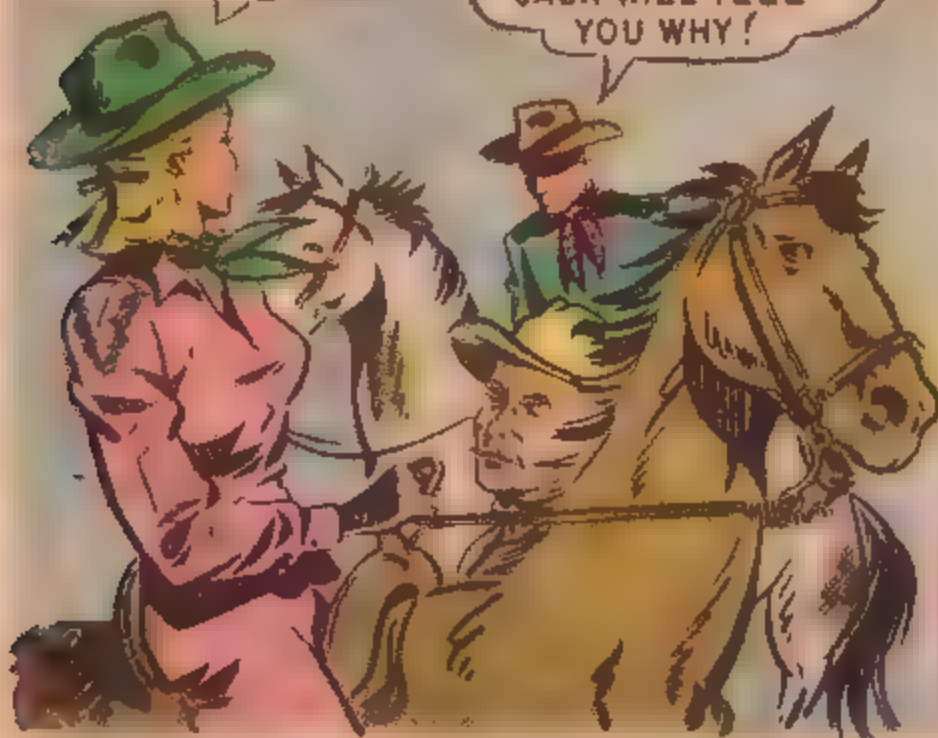
THEN
THEY'RE
NOT
MINE! I'VE
NOT RIDDEN
THAT FAR
SINCE I
WAS HURT!

GO AHEAD AND
ARREST HIM,
SHERIFF! WHAT
YUH WAITING
FOR?

AH, QUIT
YAPPING! I
KNOW MY
JOB!



DAD! WILS! WHAT'S GOING ON?



RECKON I'M UNDER ARREST, COLLIE -- JACK WILL TELL YOU WHY!

--- FOR STEALING DAD'S CATTLE! YOUR BOY FRIEND IS GOING TO JAIL!



THAT IS RIDICULOUS! IT'S JUST NOT SO!

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, MISS COLLIE!

YOU CAN'T ARREST WILS MOORE, SHERIFF! IT'S ALL NONSENSE!



I'VE GOT TO, CHILD! BUT THE TRIAL WON'T BE TILL NEXT MONTH-- AND THERE'S NO JAIL THIS SIDE OF DENVER, SO ...

...IF IT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, WADE, I'LL MAKE YOU ANSWERABLE FOR MOORE'S APPEARANCE IN KREMMLING WHEN I WANT HIM!



FINE! I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, JIM-- AND I'D LIKE A WORD WITH YOU IN PRIVATE!

OKAY... WHAT IS IT, BENT?



TODAY IS SATURDAY

PROMISE ME YOU'LL BE AT THE OLD CABIN UNDER GORE PEAK, THIS NEXT WEDNESDAY, ONE HOUR PAST NOON . AND BRING A DEPUTY!



THE PLACE WHERE I FOUND THOSE TRACKS? THUNDER! I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR GAME IS--- BUT I'LL BE THERE, BENT!

ON WEDNESDAY, COLLIE'S DAY BEGINS AS USUAL...

POOR FOX! JACK CHAINED YOU UP AGAIN-- I WONDERED WHY YOU DIDN'T COME FOR YOUR BREAKFAST!

YIP-- YIP-- YARP!

HUH! SO IT'S YOU! MAKING MORE FUSS OVER THAT DOG THAN YOU DO OVER ME!

JACK!

G'MON! GIMME A KISS--- AND MAKE IT GOOD!

YOU--- YOU'VE BEEN DRINKING! YOU'RE HURTING ME! STOP---

GRRRH!

YA-A-AH!

GRRH!

---BLASTED HOUND!

OOOH!

YOU'VE KILLED HIM! COWARD!

SHUT UP! ---OR YOU'LL GET THE SAME, SOME DAY-- YOU WHITE-FACED CAT!

I SAW WHAT HAPPENED,
BUT I WAS TOO FAR OFF
TO INTERFERE,
COLLIE!

BENT! OH--- I'M
JUST THANKFUL
THAT JACK DIDN'T
REALLY KILL FOX!

JUST KNOCKED THE
WIND OUT OF HIM---
COLLIE---ARE YOU
STILL INTENDING TO
MARRY JACK BELLOUNDS?

YES, BENT! I
DESPISE HIM---
AND I'M AFRAID
HE'LL NEVER
CHANGE--- BUT
I'VE GIVEN DAD MY
WORD THAT I'D
DO IT!

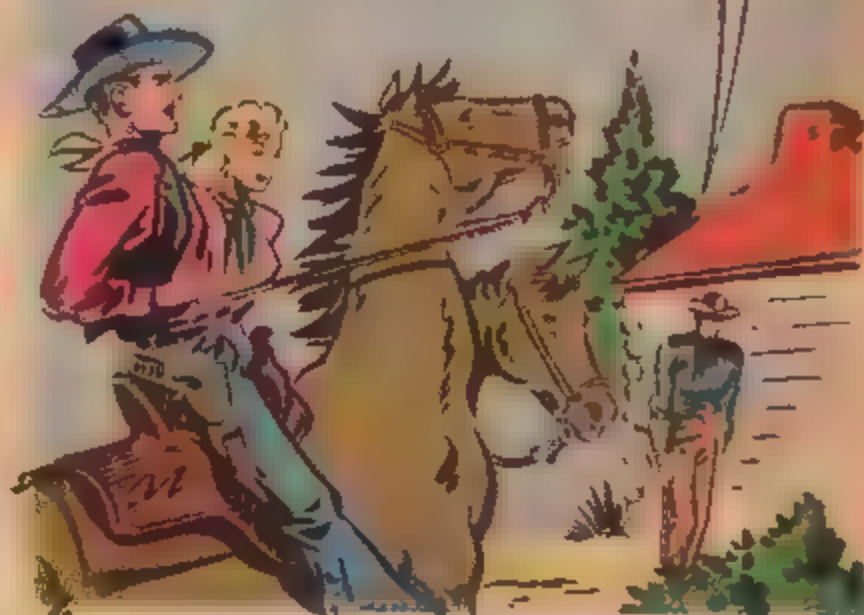
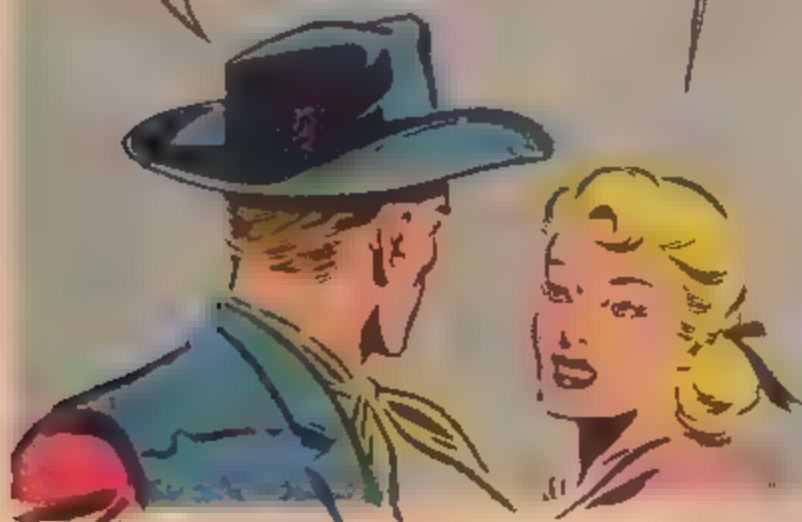


THAT'S THAT, THEN---
BUT YOU HAVEN'T DONE IT
YET--- SO HOW ABOUT
RIDING OVER TO WILS'
WITH ME, BEFORE DINNER?
IT'LL GET YOUR MIND
OFF--- THIS!

ALL RIGHT,
BENT--- I WILL!
AND I'LL TAKE
FOX WITH US!

SEE HERE WHAT
I BROUGHT YOU, WILS'!

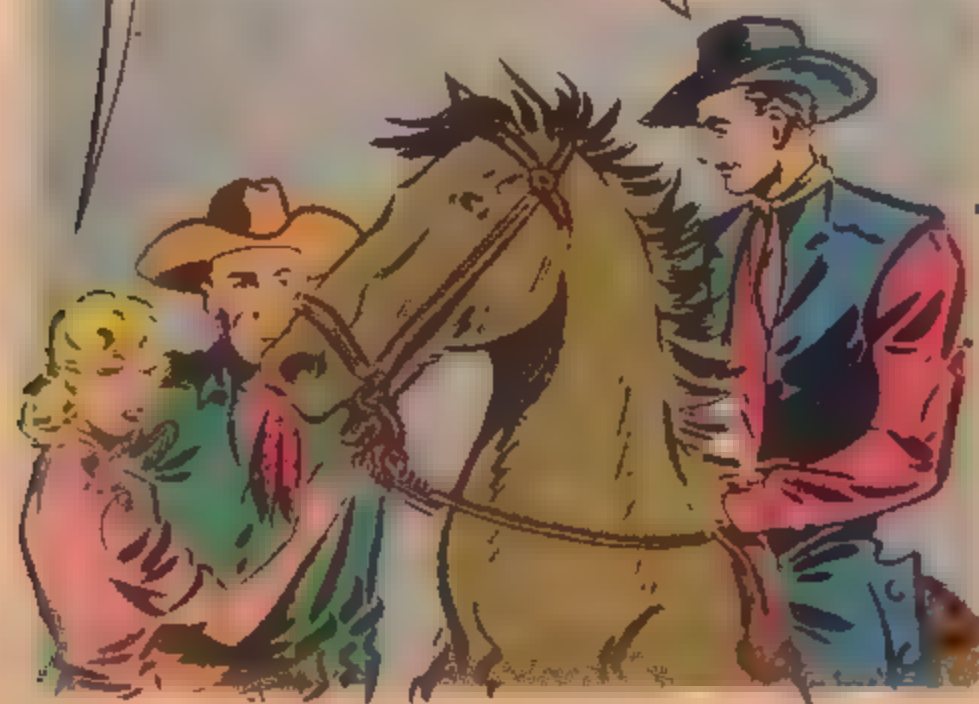
COLLIE!
THIS IS A---
A FINE
SURPRISE!

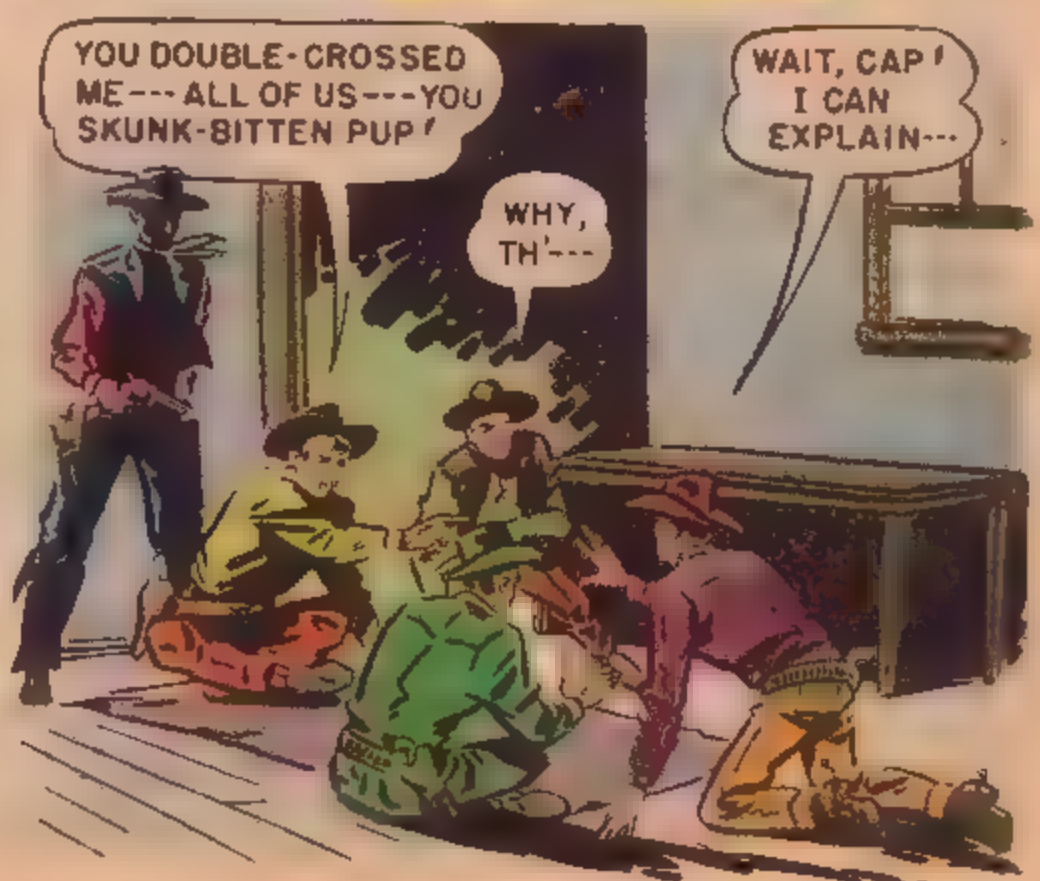
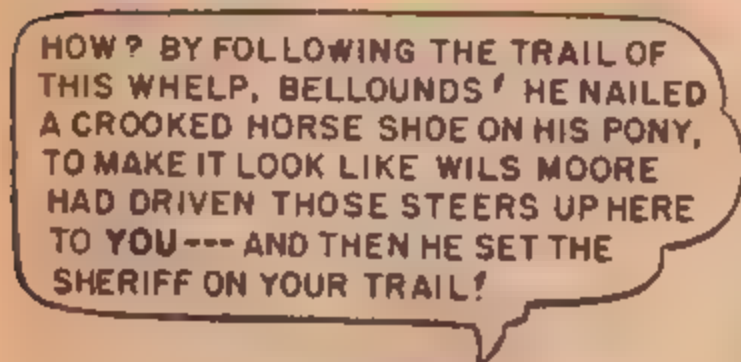
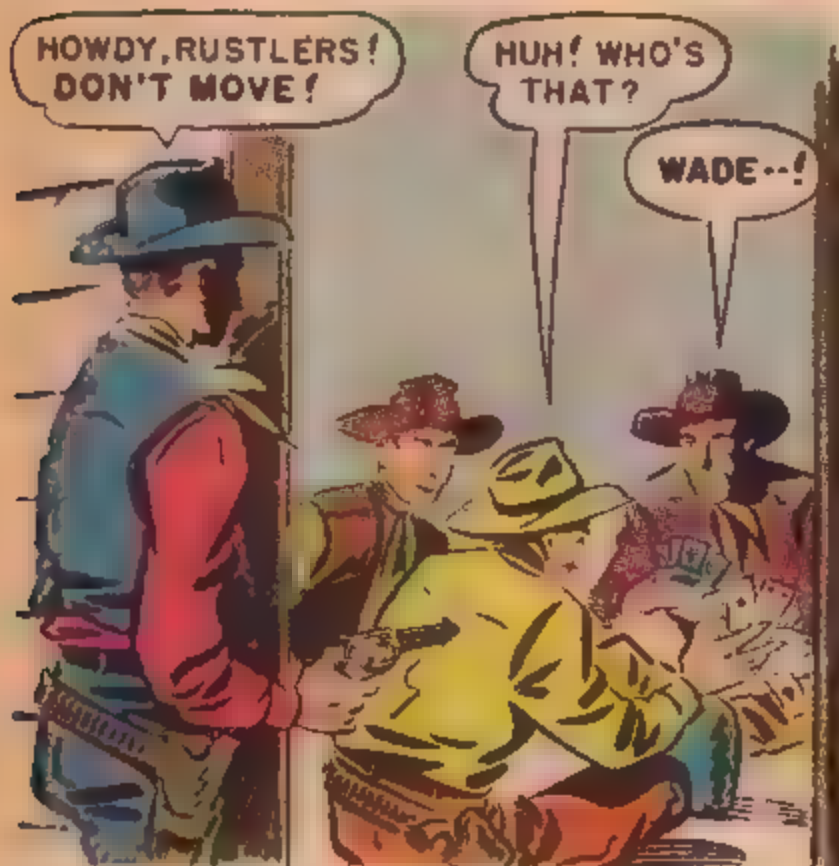
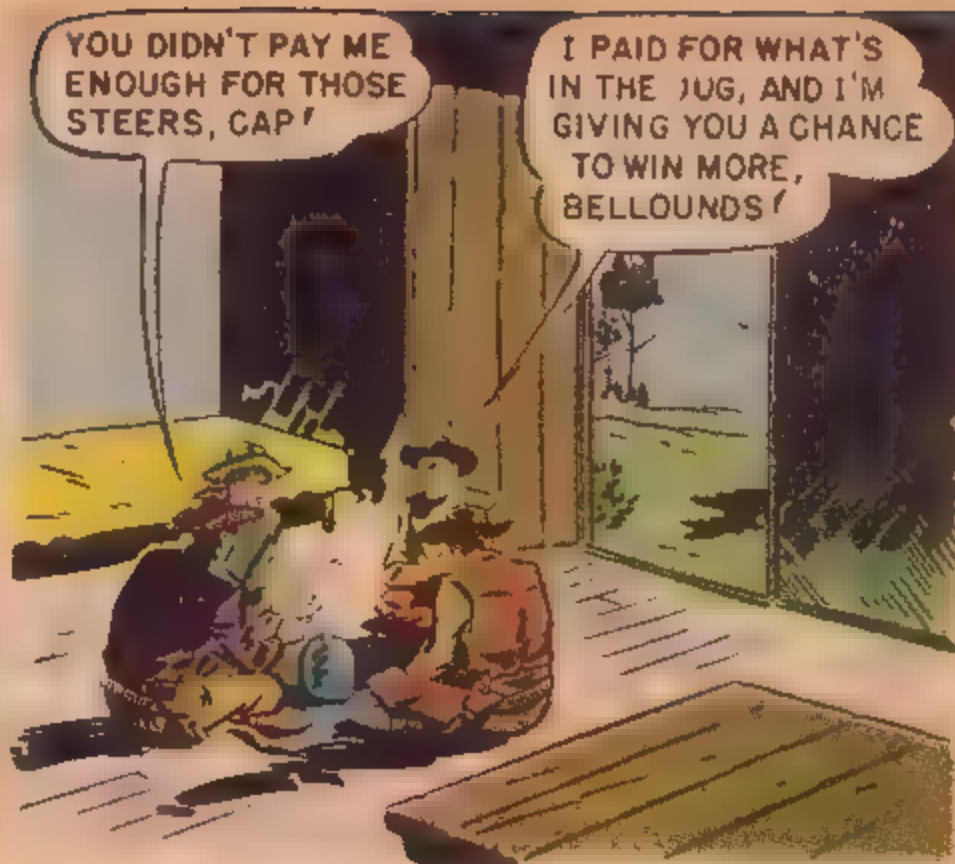
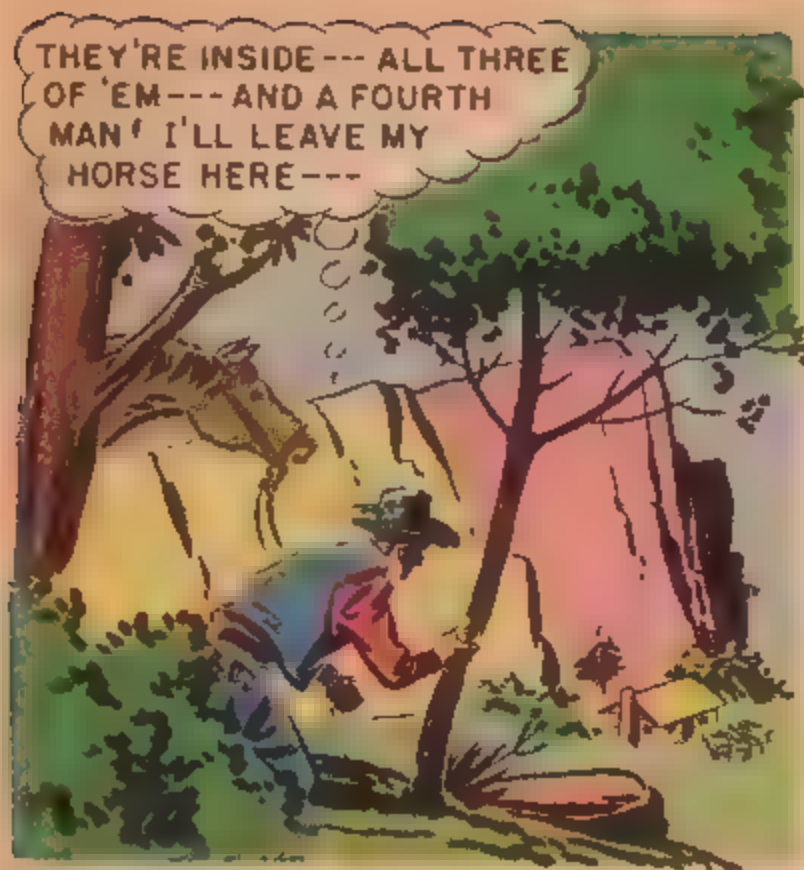


BENT! WHERE ARE
YOU GOING?

LITTLE JOB I'VE GOT TO
FINISH--- IT SHOULDN'T
TAKE LONG!

IT SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG-- BUT
IF CAP FOLSOM IS TOO QUICK ON
THE DRAW, IT MIGHT TAKE THE
REST OF MY LIFE!





CAREFUL, CAP! I DON'T
AIM TO KILL YOU UNLESS
YOU MAKE ME! SHERIFF
BURLEY'S DUE HERE ANY
MINUTE...HE'LL TAKE
YOU IN---

FOR TWENTY
YEARS IN PRISON?
I DON'T WANT
IT, WADE!

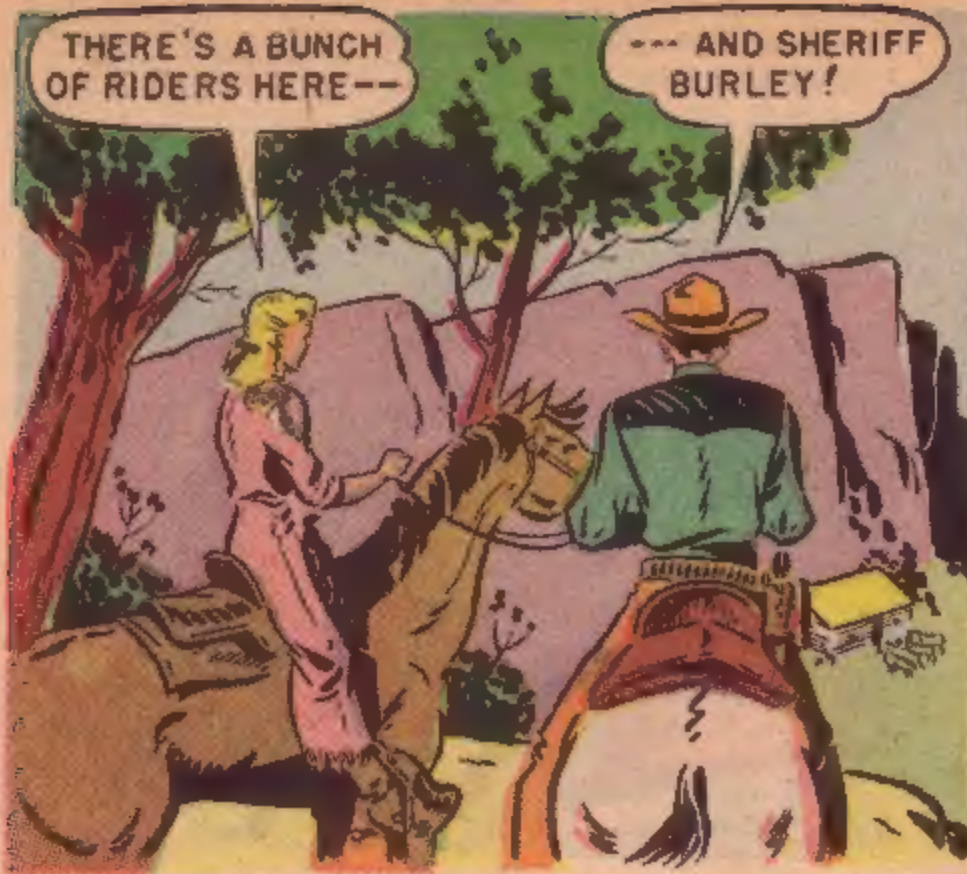
RIGHT NOW THERE'S JUST ONE
THING I WANT--- AND THAT'S
TO SEE THAT LYING, DOUBLE-
CROSSING COYOTE PUP---



I'M TOO OLD, WADE---
TOO OLD FOR PRISON!

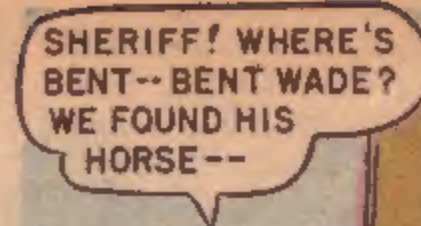




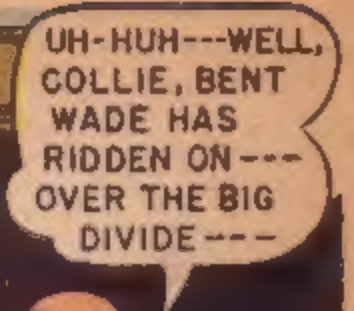


THERE'S A BUNCH
OF RIDERS HERE--

--- AND SHERIFF
BURLEY!



SHERIFF! WHERE'S
BENT-- BENT WADE?
WE FOUND HIS
HORSE--



UH-HUH---WELL,
COLLIE, BENT
WADE HAS
RIDDEN ON---
OVER THE BIG
DIVIDE---



--- BUT HE LEFT A
MESSAGE FOR YOU, AND
FOR WILS MOORE ---
YOU SEE, BENT WADE WAS
YOUR REAL FATHER!

BENT ---
MY FATHER?
AND HE ---
HE'S DEAD?

TELL US ALL,
BURLEY---



I'M GLAD-- GLAD BENT
DIDN'T KILL JACK
BELLOUNDS--- AND THAT
HE LIVED TO GIVE YOU
THE PROOF THAT CLEARS
WILS, SHERIFF!

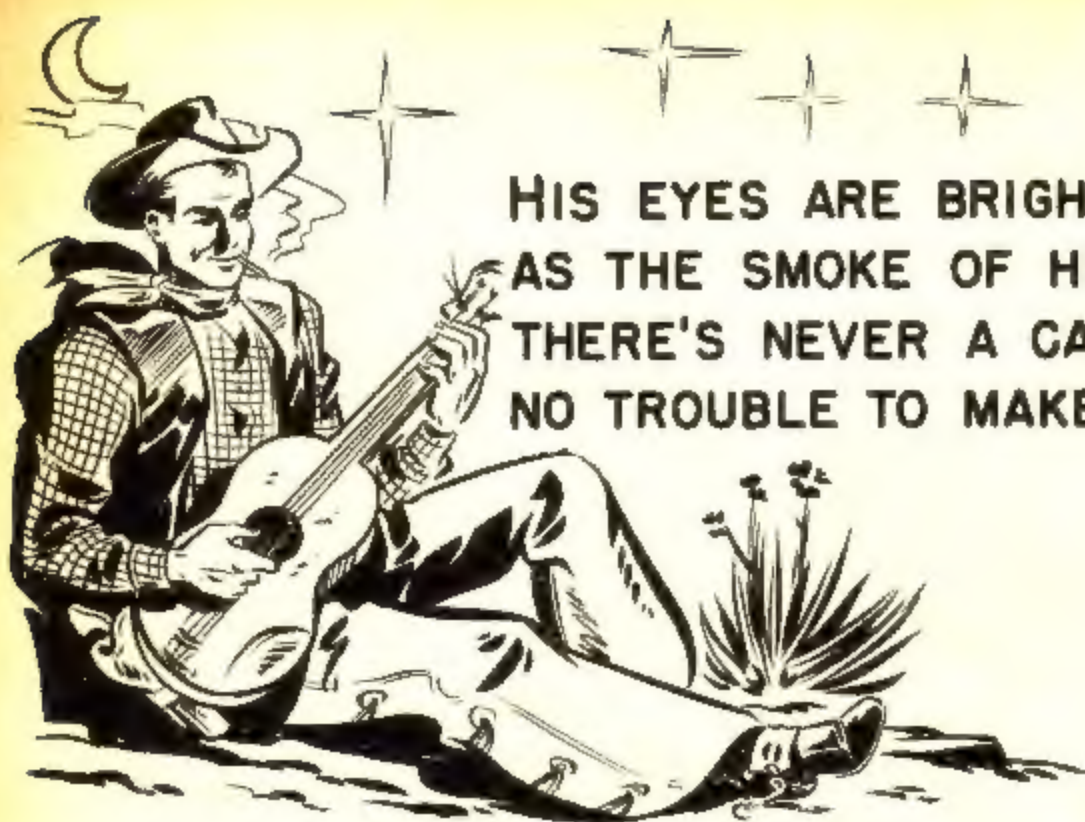
HE WAS GLAD OF
THAT, TOO, COLLIE--
HE HOPED YOU
WOULD FEEL HE'D
PAID A LITTLE
OF HIS DEBT
TO YOU!



HE DID MORE THAN
THAT! HE GAVE ME A
FATHER'S LOVE-- AND HE
GAVE ME MY LIFE, WITH
YOU, WILS--- AT THE
COST OF HIS OWN!

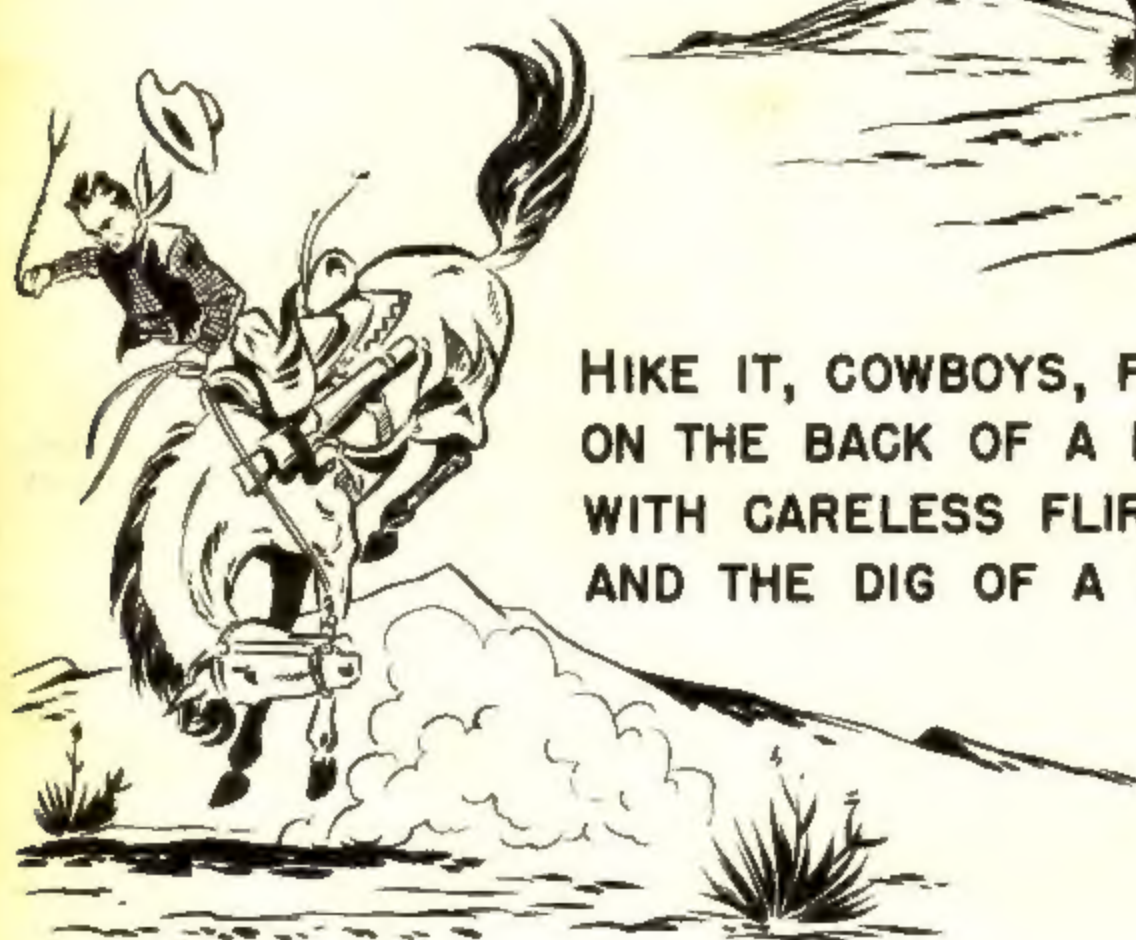
I CAN'T THINK
OF HIM AS DEAD,
COLLIE! HE IS
JUST RIDING
ON-- INTO A
DEEPER
MYSTERY!





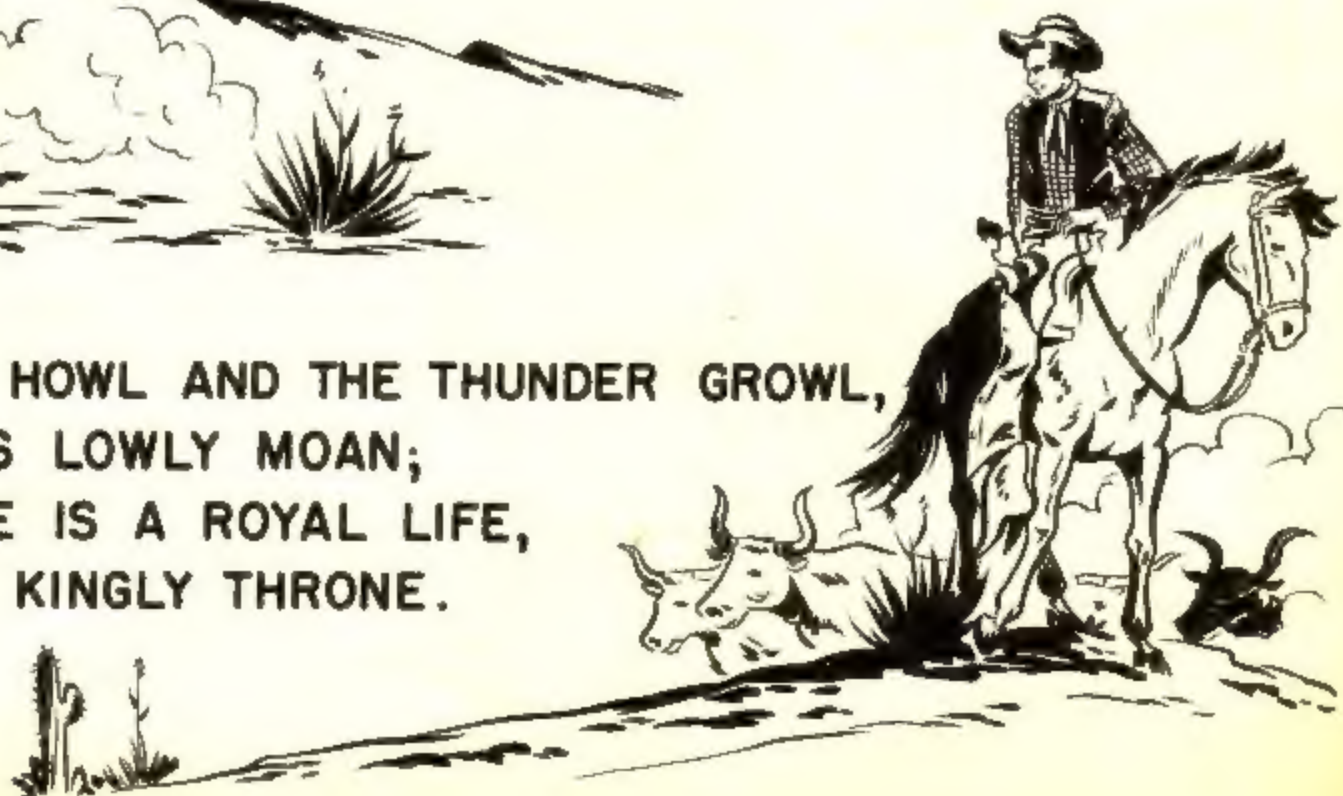
HIS EYES ARE BRIGHT AND HIS HEART IS LIGHT
AS THE SMOKE OF HIS CIGARETTE;
THERE'S NEVER A CARE FOR HIS SOUL TO BEAR,
NO TROUBLE TO MAKE HIM FRET.

THE RAPID BEAT OF HIS BRONCO'S FEET
ON THE SOD AS HE SPEEDS ALONG
KEEPS LIVING TIME TO THE RINGING RHYME
OF HIS ROLICKING COWBOY SONG.



HIKE IT, COWBOYS, FOR THE RANGE AWAY
ON THE BACK OF A BRONG OF STEEL,
WITH CARELESS FLIRT OF THE RAWHIDE QUIRT
AND THE DIG OF A ROWELED HEEL.

THE WINDS MAY HOWL AND THE THUNDER GROWL,
OR THE BREEZES LOWLY MOAN;
A COWBOY'S LIFE IS A ROYAL LIFE,
HIS SADDLE HIS KINGLY THRONE.





Where the Pecos River winds and turns in its journey to the sea,
From its white walls of sand and rock striving ever to be free,
Near the highest railroad bridge that all these modern times have
seen,

Dwells fair young Patty Morehead, the Pecos River queen.
She is known by every cowboy on the Pecos River wide;
They know full well that she can shoot, that she can rope and ride.
She goes out to every roundup, every cow work without fail,
Looking out for her cattle, branded "walking hog on rail."
She made her start with cattle, yes, made it with a rope;
Can tie down every maverick before it can strike a lope.
She can rope and tie and brand it as quick as any man;
She's voted by all cowboys an A-1 top cowhand.

Across the Comstock railroad bridge, the highest in the West,
Patty rode her horse one day, a lover's heart to test;
For he told her he would gladly risk all dangers for her sake—
But the puncher wouldn't follow, so she's still without a mate.